

# Education, Daily Routine, and Prospects of Primary School Teachers in Haiti: Delay, Drudgery, and Dreams

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**Dedicated to my parents  
Heinz and Elisabeth Sauer**

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## 1 Introduction

Last night in sleep  
I saw people  
Starting to live as people  
Each one  
Living for everyone  
Everyone  
Living for each one  
  
Then like a miracle  
The tears in life's eyes dried  
Death stepped aside  
For the open gate to let life pass  
And take liberty by the hand  
To go party  
To go dance<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Background of the Research

The idea for this research project developed during a four-year sojourn in Haiti from 1997 to 2001. In 1997 and 1998, I explored the educational opportunities of Haitian children with a focus on access to primary schooling. For my thesis,<sup>2</sup> I consulted respective literature, and I

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<sup>1</sup> Désiré, Jean R., 4th and 5th stanza of his poem "Dream". In Laraque & Hirschman (Eds.). Open Gate: An Anthology of Haitian Creole Poetry. 2001, pp.114-117

<sup>2</sup> Thiel, Probleme des Schulzugangs in Haiti [Problems of Access to Schooling in Haiti]. 1998

interviewed children, parents, teachers, Education Ministry staff, and other professionals in different organizations involved in primary schooling.

When scheduling interviews with children and young adults about their educational experiences, I sought out divergent samples. A thirteen-year-old girl had the least formal education, having never attended school, but could calculate astonishingly well--a skill learned from selling bananas with her mother. At the other end of the scale, was a young man whose father was an attorney and who attended one of the private elite high schools. All the other informants were situated between these two extremes, for example:

- A fourteen-year-old boy lived by himself in a small tin hut. His mother had died and his father worked in the Dominican Republic. He carried sacks of flour in a bakery to make some money, and his father occasionally supported him. The boy attended a school associated with the school network of the Salesian order. His dream was to become a pilot one day.
- A fourteen-year-old girl came from a family with ten children. She had been given away to work in a household as a *restavèk* ("child servant," see explanations in 4.1) when she was twelve years old. Two years later, she was passed on to work for a woman in Port-au-Prince. She was fortunate to be included in a school project for "at risk" children. After she cleaned, washed clothes, and fetched water in the morning, she could go to school in the afternoon.
- A young man, who had graduated in civil engineering, described how his illiterate mother had worked hard to finance her childrens' schooling by cooking and selling food in a small restaurant. It was extremely difficult for her to pay even the small annual fees for the public school. After primary school, he competed against more than a thousand other students in an elimination test, and qualified for one of twenty spots available in the public *lycée* of his hometown. There were twenty more spots, available without testing, for children who had the "right" connections<sup>3</sup>.

I visited most of the schools that my informants had attended and talked to their teachers or directors. While doing so, I realized that "going to school" in Haiti did not mean that everyone received an education of same quality. I became curious about the teachers: Why were the educational levels of teachers in different schools so divergent? After a discussion with personnel in the Ministry of Education (see 8.2), it became clear that even the government professionals did not know much about teachers in the countryside: Why else would they be shocked at the low level of education

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<sup>3</sup> During the Duvaliers' dictatorship children of *macoute*-officers (see 4.2) had preferential access to public schools (see 6.3).

attained by their compatriots? Obviously, there was a difference between working with statistics and working directly with rural teachers.

Family income and proximity to a school were the factors that most influenced whether a child was able to attend school. For those who were able, the Haitian primary schools varied significantly in quality. Poor children and those who lived in remote areas were least likely to attend a school of good quality. Another decisive factor that regulated access to a good education was a child's fluency in French, which is spoken by the elite, as opposed to only speaking Creole, the mother tongue of the majority. An educational reform that mandated Creole as a language of instruction and a subject in primary schools was regarded by disadvantaged parents as a deliberate attempt to exclude the poor from learning French and thus was applied only half-heartedly by most of the private schools. Haiti's unique school landscape, comprised of nearly 90% private schools, had developed in response to high demand for schooling and a low supply of public schools.

After finishing my studies, I taught in the education department of Quisqueya University in Port-au-Prince, over a period of six semesters, from 1998 to 2001. Most of my students were in their mid-to-late twenties and were already working as teachers (in some cases even as directors). Others were involved in teacher-training projects for disadvantaged schools. In the seminars, their experiences provided for practical, down-to-earth discussions from which I could learn a lot. To gain a better understanding of their individual viewpoints and experiences, I interviewed some of my students in 2001 and resolved to do more interviews with teachers in the countryside. In November 2001, however, I had to leave Haiti, and so my research in the field was temporarily brought to a close. In July 2006, I was able to return, as part of a teacher-training project in a remote coastal town in Haiti, and conducted the remaining interviews that were central to this research. To allow for the description of processes, attitudes, and opinions qualitative research methods were used throughout the research, while Grounded Theory provided for a flexible approach.

## **1.2 Purpose and the Research Question**

In-service teacher training can only succeed if the teachers being trained are respected for what they "are" and guided to what they can "become." The purpose of the first part of my research was to determine and describe what Haitian primary school teachers "are." For the most part, this research was only marginally concerned with the few teachers who graduated from a university and now teach in the elite schools in Port-au-Prince; instead, the focus was upon developing an in-depth and real-life picture of the much larger group of less-educated teachers living and teaching in the Haitian countryside.

Interviews with selected teachers, conducted during the teacher-training summer project, provided most of the data for the descriptions of their educational and family backgrounds and of their daily challenges. An additional aspect of my research was the investigation and description of



the teachers' future career prospects, based upon their own assessments. However, it must not be forgotten that the realization of these predictions or "dreams" cannot be detached from the limitations imposed by the stratified Haitian education system, which is well-established in this divided, unstable, violent and unjust society. Within this context, the purpose of my research was not only to examine the teachers' actual role in the Haitian society, but also their potential role--what they can "become."

To allow for the description of processes, attitudes, and opinions qualitative research methods based on Grounded Theory were used for the collection, analysis, and description of data. The presentation of these findings is intended to be a contribution to a more accurate and useful understanding of the challenging and complex situation in which most Haitian primary school teachers must survive. With a deeper insight gained from this information, it is my hope that the design and implementation of future teacher-training programs in Haiti can be better directed toward fulfilling these teachers' unique needs. In order to make this study accessible to anyone engaged in further research or the development of training programs for teachers in rural Haiti, I decided to write this study in English and to use the online format of the *Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* for the publication of this thesis.<sup>4</sup>

The research question, which encompasses the above-stated declarations of purpose and direction for this investigation, can be summarized as follows: What type of obstacles did primary school teachers in rural Haiti encounter in their own education, what professional and social challenges are faced in the daily routines of these teachers, and how can a thorough knowledge of both their backgrounds and the conditions of their current lives help to improve the quality of their teaching as well as their prospects for socio-economic advancement?

### **1.3 Thesis Format**

Following the general introduction of background, purpose, and the research question in this chapter, a review of the literature that I consider important to this study is presented in chapter 2. As the very limited amount of literature about teachers in Haiti is introduced in later chapters, I included a selection of literature about teachers in developing countries and their training, as well as literature regarding international educational developments at the interface of globalization and cultural diversity. Chapter 3 details the theoretical framework of the research, the research

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<sup>4</sup> This falls in line with Vulliamy's advice to make use of the "considerable potential" that qualitative research strategies had by "widespread dissemination of such research both to policy-makers and to members of the academic community" (Vulliamy, Lewin, & Stephens, p. 25).

process, the methods used for the collection and analysis of data, and the limitations of this research across cultural diversities. Chapter 4 is devoted to general background information about Haiti, its history and its spirituality.

Recent research about rural Haiti is summarized in chapter 5, while chapters 6 and 7 focus on the historical and present states of the Haitian education system. In chapters 8, 9, and 10, the empirical data of this research are introduced. Finally, in chapter 11, the findings are linked to the context of the Haitian society and to educational trends in other developing countries, conclusions regarding the challenges in the teachers' lives are presented, and recommendations for the development of teacher-training programs are made. The Appendices contain several expert interviews (A), short profiles of all teachers (Haitian participants as well as foreign staff) that I interviewed during the summer project in 2006 (B), and a Glossary of Creole terms used in this dissertation.

The source from which the spelling of the Creole words is taken is the Haitian – English Dictionary;<sup>5</sup> the spelling of words connected to Vodou is taken from the glossary in Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the preferred spelling of the word "Vodou," I join those<sup>7</sup> who choose to step away from the ugly image associated with the spelling--"voodoo" (see 4.3). Along with Smith<sup>8</sup> I have adopted "Averill's system for signifying the pluralization of Creole terms within English text by substituting an "-s" for the Creole ending *yo*."

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<sup>5</sup> Freeman & Laguerre, 2002

<sup>6</sup> Cosentino, 1995, p. 430

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Journal of Haitian Studies, Cosentino, Geggus, McCarthy Brown, or C. Michel

<sup>8</sup> Smith, 2001, p. 16

## 2 Literature Review

Literature that portrays the global context of education and the teaching profession is presented in this chapter as well as selected studies of teachers in developing countries. This broad perspective allows for the relative positioning of the Haitian education system and teachers within the framework of the international educational community. In addition, various causes of tension between the global and local educational communities are identified. The limited amount of literature that specifically addresses the schooling and teachers in Haiti is discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

### 2.1 Global Guidelines

Soon after its formation, the United Nations declared its collaborative definition of human rights. From the beginning, the right to education was a basic part of this proclamation which reflected the importance assigned to formal education by each of the member states. References to education and teaching were made in several UN declarations.<sup>9</sup>

In the **General Declaration of Human Rights** (1948)<sup>10</sup>, article 26 pertained to education:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

The **Convention against Discrimination in Education** (1960/1962)<sup>11</sup> specifically stressed equal access to education of same quality for all persons or groups of persons within a country. Article 1 of this convention stated:

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<sup>9</sup> For detailed explanations see: Lenhart, Pädagogik der Menschenrechte. 2006, pp. 155-175

<sup>10</sup> [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

<sup>11</sup> [www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/DISCRI_E.PDF)

For the purpose of this Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:

- a) of depriving any person or group of persons access to education of any type or at any level;
- b) of limiting any person or group of persons access to education of an inferior standard;
- c) subject to the provisions of Article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or
- d) of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man.

The important role of the teachers in a cohesive school system is addressed in article 13:2(e) of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966)<sup>12</sup>:

The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, in article 28.1 of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989)<sup>14</sup>, the right to education was further extended to include the concept of "equal opportunity." In articles 19:1 and 28:2, a non-violent education was advocated:

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitations, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

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<sup>12</sup> [www.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm)

<sup>13</sup> In contrast to these principles UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2005 showed a declining trend in primary-school teacher salary ratio to per capita GDP in developing countries between 1975 and 2000. While the average teacher salary was six times as high as per capita GDP in 1975, by the year 2000 the ratio had been nearly halved. (p. 165)

<sup>14</sup> [www.unicef.org/crc/](http://www.unicef.org/crc/)

In 1990, when representatives of 155 nations assembled in Jomtien, Thailand, millions of children, young people and adults around the globe were still deprived of basic education. During that conference, the formation of an accord--the **World Declaration on Education for All**<sup>15</sup>--condemned the following statistics that reflected the state of global education at that time:

- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- more than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;
- more than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural change; and
- more than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills.

With this deplorable situation in mind, the purpose of the Jomtien declaration was to ensure the commitment of all participants to the provision of educational opportunities that would satisfy the basic learning needs of children, young people and adults in all countries of the world. In the subsequently developed **Framework for Action**, special emphasis was placed upon universal access to, and completion of, primary education by the year 2000. Additional goals were also set: the expansion of early childhood care, a reduction in the rate of adult illiteracy, and an increase in the utilization of all available means of communication to promote "the knowledge, skills and values required for better living." Strategies to initiate immediate action at national, regional, and world levels were suggested.

While the "government authorities, communities and their several in-country partners" were considered the "key agents for improvements," the core sponsors of the Education for All initiative (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank) affirmed "their commitments to supporting the priority areas for international action" (e.g., the support of the design of national plans of action, cooperation in the development of means to provide universal primary education, and assistance in the establishment of literacy programs for youth and adults).

In 2000, a follow-up conference was held in Dakar, Senegal in order to assess the progress made by different countries in achieving the intended educational goals and to renew the commitment to Education for All. It

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<sup>15</sup> Both, the Jomtien Declaration and the Jomtien Framework For Action can be found at: [www.unesco.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE\\_.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE_.PDF)

was found that, from 1990 to 1998, the world's net enrolment rate for primary schooling had risen from 80% to 84%. In the region that had previously rated lowest (Africa south of the Sahara), an increase from 54% to 60% had occurred.<sup>16</sup> The goals of the Jomtien **Framework for Action**, however, had not been fully achieved, and so a new resolution to fulfil these goals by 2015 was detailed in Article 7 of the **Dakar Framework for Action**.<sup>17</sup>

- i. expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- ii. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- iii. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- iv. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- v. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- vi. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (pp. 1-2)

As of this writing, the most recent evaluation of progress was found in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007. The Summary<sup>18</sup> of this report stated that the world net primary enrolment ratio had increased to 86%. This equated to an enrolment increase of 21 million primary school-aged children between 1999 and 2004 but also signified that 77 million children in this age group were still not enrolled. This statistic reflected efforts in all regions during these five years, and included the highest increase which occurred in Africa south of the Sahara (27%).

Yet, in order to achieve universal enrolment on primary level by 2015, much more effort will be required. The African countries south of the

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<sup>16</sup> Frommer & Hartmann, "Bildung in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit" in Wölfig & Lenhart (Eds.), Globalisierung und Bildung: Das Heidelberger Dienstagsseminar 2001. 2003, p. 81

<sup>17</sup> [www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed\\_for\\_all/dakfram\\_eng.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/dakfram_eng.shtml)

<sup>18</sup> The full Report as well as the Summary can be found at: <http://portal.unesco.org/education>

Sahara will need 1.6 million additional teachers in order to fulfil this goal and to reduce the pupil-to-teacher ratio to 40:1.<sup>19</sup> In an other source<sup>20</sup> it is stated that almost 80 countries will need to enlarge teacher workforces significantly if EFA goals are to be met in the next decade.

The following excerpt from the EFA Summary 2007 suggests means by which the number of teachers could be increased in rural areas in particular:

Shorter pre-service training with more on-the-job practice and professional development, and incentives to work in remote and rural areas, are effective strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly in difficult contexts.<sup>21</sup>

Proposed incentives to increase teacher commitment were the provision of good quality housing, special allowances, and "accelerated promotion and/or preferential access to opportunities to improve their qualifications." In addition the promotion of a "greater sense of involvement in decision-making" for teachers was advocated.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, in the above mentioned ILO/UNESCO CEART Report the long-term efficacy of the widespread practice of recruiting unqualified personnel as teachers was considered "highly questionable" as the "implementation of such strategies has necessarily carried with it an adverse trade off in terms of quality of education and the morale, status and conditions of the teaching profession generally." It was urgently recommended "to develop and implement policies that aim within stipulated time lines to provide for continued professional development of contract or unqualified teachers and to integrate all teachers into a single, regular teaching force after attainment of requisite professional qualifications, as contemplated by the 1966 Recommendation."<sup>23</sup>

## **2.2 Global Agenda versus Local Reality**

In the introduction<sup>24</sup> to the UNESCO report "Learning the Treasure Within," generally referred to as the "Delors Report," Jacques Delors noted obstacles that had to be acknowledged and overcome. First mentioned was the "tension between the global and the local: people need gradually

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<sup>19</sup> Summary EFA 2007, p. 3

<sup>20</sup> Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), Ninth Session, Geneva, 30 October-3 November 2006, Report. 2007, p. 12  
[www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/ceart06/ceartr.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/ceart06/ceartr.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Summary EFA 2007, p. 3

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 14

<sup>23</sup> ILO/UNESCO CEART, p. 13

<sup>24</sup> Delors, "Education the Necessary Utopia." 1996. <http://unesco.org/delors/>

to become world citizens without losing their roots and while continuing to play an active part in the life of their nation and their local community."<sup>25</sup> Another difficulty, "the tension between the spiritual and the material," was said to be a challenge for every society:

Often without realizing it, the world has a longing, often unexpressed, for an ideal and for values that we shall term 'moral'. It is thus education's noble task to encourage each and every one, acting in accordance with their traditions and convictions and paying full respect to pluralism, to lift their minds and spirits to the plan of the universal and, in some measure, to transcend themselves. It is no exaggeration on the Commission's part to say that the survival of humanity depends thereon.<sup>26</sup>

Although the "Delors Report" offered a thoughtful and sensitive perspective on the struggles of developing countries, tensions between northern and southern development concepts continued to prevail. The implementation of a course of action in a developing country, designed to serve the agenda of global educational development, was often inextricably paired with a loan from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. These powerful institutions had a history of exercising enormous influence on the policies of national governments, at times with questionable intent and disastrous consequences. Even though these agencies have engaged in a rhetoric of partnership and cooperation for quite some time, the realization of these ideas lagged far behind. Crossley and Watson came to the conclusion "that only if there is a more genuine form of partnership between the rich countries and donors of the North and their counterparts in the South, will there be a realistic chance for global disparities to be resolved."<sup>27</sup>

The main concern of the critics of the World Bank's educational commitment was the Bank's powerful, unchecked authority that created within the recipient countries an imbalanced allotment of both power and dependency. Another point of critique was the Bank's "inability to see issues other than from a global or North American perspective", and its "unhealthy strong influence on setting the agenda for educational policies throughout the South"<sup>28</sup>. In this context Crossley and Watson specified the World Bank's share of international assistance to education: "By 2001 with a cumulative total of around 640 educational projects spread across 115 countries, the total figure that had been disbursed over the previous 35 years was calculated at US\$28.8 billion (World Bank, Human Development

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<sup>25</sup> Delors, p.3

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>27</sup> Crossley & Watson, Comparative and International Research in Education: Globalization, context and difference. 2003, p. 100

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 90



Network 2002). This amounted to by far the largest proportion of international aid to education given by any multilateral agency."<sup>29</sup>

Given the persistent international inequities, the World Bank was reproached for serving as an agent of global markets; it was alleged that, even as they supported projects of basic education and welfare, they provided the structure that global corporations needed to secure investments that would allow them "to operate unfettered and unregulated across the globe." Crossley and Watson pointed out that the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)<sup>30</sup> received the most criticism and that there was "much evidence to suggest that they have led to increased world-wide poverty and to a breakdown in social cohesion."<sup>31</sup>

Yet, Crossley and Watson also observed that, from the "failure of many internationally inspired educational development initiatives to be successfully implemented in practice", a new awareness had emerged:

We have also seen how some globalisation theorists recognise that one consequence of the impact of powerful international agendas is, ironically, the stimulation of different local responses. ... Attention to context, culture and difference is thus, simultaneously with globalisation increasingly evident in the work of a wide range of academics, and in that carried out by professionals engaged more directly in matters of policy and practice. ... On a wider plane this represents a most significant shift; and an important coalescence of thinking that links qualitative research to earlier historical and interpretive traditions in the comparative field, and to poststructuralist respect for context and difference.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, it appeared that local populations were not completely at the mercy of international agendas; although responses to global pressure varied between resistance and submission, there were also adaptations

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<sup>29</sup> Crossley & Watson, p. 90

<sup>30</sup> The WHO holds the following explanation: "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) are economic policies for developing countries that have been promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) since the early 1980 by the provision of loans conditional on the adoption of such policies. ... SAPs policies include currency devaluation, managed balance of payments, reduction of government services through public spending cuts/ budget deficit cuts, reducing tax on high earners, reducing inflation, wage suppression, privatization, lower tariffs on imports and tighter monetary policy, increased free trade, cuts in social spending, and business deregulation. ...In health, SAPs affect both the supply of health services (by insisting on cuts in health spending) and the demand for health services (by reducing household income, thus leaving people with less money for health)." Retrieved July 19, 2007, from [www.who.int/trade/glossary](http://www.who.int/trade/glossary)

<sup>31</sup> Crossley & Watson, p. 100

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 62

that incorporated a selective combination of responses. When Houtard and Rémy<sup>33</sup> studied the cultural impacts of globalization on Haiti, they noted that analytical thinking not only characterized the global hegemony of northern countries, but, on the local level, certain social classes had also developed a monopoly on this modern way of knowing and thinking. In contrast were those who resisted and adhered to symbolic thinking<sup>34</sup> by practising cultural *marronage* (refuge). This symbolic thinking served as a means of retaining and passing on collective values: the respect for nature--as a receptacle for the *lwa*-s (gods) and mother of the *mapou* (large tree with magic and tutelary powers), the solidarity of the members of a *lakou* (a group of huts occupied by members of an extended family), the responsibility of the individual toward the community, the reciprocity of social relations, and the importance of consensus in collective decisions. Symbolic thinking also maintained a connection to origins: to the history of rebellions against exploitation and to the multiple occasions of resistance against opportunistic political forces, e.g., the colonial whites, the new powers (black or mulatto), the foreign occupation troops, and the military rule. Symbolic thinking essentially affirmed and protected the Haitian identity against cultural aggression.<sup>35 36</sup>

Reflecting upon educational reform, Kempner<sup>37</sup> also recognized the difference between upper classes and the ordinary people, and questioned the usefulness of modern rationalist concepts:

The rationalist assumptions of modernism are not capable of guiding educational reform towards a future that is capable of meeting the New Competition while meeting the needs of the least advantaged members

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<sup>33</sup> Houtard & Rémy, *Haït et la mondialisation de la culture: Étude des mentalités et des religions face aux réalités économiques, sociales et politiques* [Haiti and the Globalization of Culture]. 2000

<sup>34</sup> Houtard & Rémy distinguish between analytical thinking that has become dominant, forming the basis of our knowledge and the technical development, and the reification of representations (symbolic or magic thinking) that characterized most of the pre-capitalist societies.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 9-12

<sup>36</sup> An example of symbolic thinking among Haitian farm workers who came to the United States as boat people is related by Craige (1986), p. 198: "Dominique Dorsinvil watched the slides that I had taken of his hometown village. He said that the images reminded him of his country and he obviously took pleasure in viewing them. He did not recognize any of the buildings or scenes as coming from his own village, however, and I finally asked him if he felt that he had ever visited the places pictured. He said that he had not. Then I showed him a slide of his wife and children standing in front of his house. The forty-nine year old man jumped out of his chair, yelled the name of his wife and rushed to the wall to hug her. In that moment the family was in the room with us."

<sup>37</sup> Kempner, "Post-modernizing education in the periphery and in the core," *International Review of Education* 44, 5/6, 1998, pp. 441-460

of the society. Because the benefits of modernisation are not widely distributed among the social classes, educational reform should be guided by cognitive maps that reject rationalism and Eurocentrism. Such concepts of modernity perpetuate the colonialism of many developing countries not only by the industrialised countries but by their own upper classes.<sup>38</sup>

Stromquist and Monkman<sup>39</sup> explained "efforts to recapture traditional identities and values ... as unintended effects of globalization"<sup>40</sup> and, recognizing both trends, noted that "while the world is becoming smaller and more homogeneous at some levels, in a variety of ways local cultures are making efforts to retain their identity and, in some cases, even to rediscover it."<sup>41 42</sup>

A by-product of the growing influence of the global market was that economic criteria like "efficiency" and "productivity" were increasingly implanted into concepts of schooling. According to Stromquist and Monkman, the unintended consequences of this shift from a "child-centered curriculum to economy-centered vocational training" were the devaluation of "fields less connected to the market ... e.g., history vis-à-vis maths and science" and, "on a broader scale," the disintegration of progress previously achieved in "issues of equality and equity concerning women and ethnic minorities." These ideals were superseded in importance by the objective of "efficiency (often reduced to performance in maths and reading tests)."<sup>43</sup> In conclusion, Stromquist and Monkman stressed the importance of solidarity:

Today more than ever, there is a need to ask, Education for what will prevail in the globalization age? Will it be only to make us more productive and increase our ability to consume, or will it be able to instill in all of us a democratic spirit with values of solidarity? This solidarity will have to recognize the different interests among men and women and among the dominant groups and disadvantaged groups.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> As quoted in Crossley & Watson, p. 63

<sup>39</sup> Stromquist & Monkman, "Defining Globalization and Assessing Its Implications on Knowledge and Education." In Stromquist & Monkman (Eds.), Globalization and Education: Integration and Contestation across Cultures. 2000, pp. 3-25

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 8

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 7

<sup>42</sup> This heterogenous local response to global agendas is also confirmed in Arnove & Torres (2003).

<sup>43</sup> Stromquist & Monkman, p. 12-13

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 21-22

Catherine Odora Hoppers<sup>45</sup> related how the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs were imposed upon African countries not only through economic policies but through "institutional arrangements, ownership, privatization, changes in public service delivery systems, and political practice."<sup>46</sup> She asserted that the implementation of these SAPs, which were prerequisite for aid loans, had created a situation in which "African countries have very little influence over their own development agenda."<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Odora Hoppers claimed that these "requirements for meeting the demands of donor conditionality increasingly mean that public officials account more to the World Bank and the IMF than to the people."<sup>48</sup>

In contrast to the agendas of large profit-oriented organizations, Odora Hoppers drew attention to the inherent nature of African development concepts:

Embodied in the African philosophy of *ubuntu*, a new universalism, which seeks to affirm a concept of development in which fear is replaced by joy, insecurity by confidence and materialism by spiritual values, promises to emerge. *Ubuntu* is humaneness, care, understanding, and empathy. It is the ethic and interaction that occurs in the African extended family. The *ubuntu* concept is found in proverbs from many African societies and communities such as "the stomach of the traveler is small," "a home is a real one if people visit it" (Zulu), "a bird builds its nest with another bird's feathers," and "the hands wash each other" (Xhosa).<sup>49</sup>

In a lecture on the role of the university<sup>50</sup> Odora Hoppers advocated the promotion of African indigenous knowledge. She affirmed that, in spite of being marginalized, it remained alive and sustained "millions of people economically, socially and spiritually." Nevertheless, the combined efforts of colonialism, capitalism and science in promoting individualism and in subjugating diverse African knowledges had forced indigenous knowledge to hide--it was "denied space, resources and the recognition it ought to have."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Odora Hoppers, "Globalization and the Social Construction of Reality: Affirming or Unmasking the 'Inevitable'?" In Stromquist & Monkman (2000), pp. 99-119

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 109

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 109

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 111

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 114

<sup>50</sup> Odora Hoppers, "Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development: The Role of the University." Conference on Development Priorities and the Role of Tertiary Education, 8-12 March 2004, Wilton Park, England

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 8

Odora Hoppers further stated:

These knowledges therefore

- need to be protected, developed, promoted or integrated in order that present and future generations can benefit from them. It is not desirable to develop a system that only documents and preserves this knowledge created in the past and which may be on the brink of disappearance.
- demand a people-centred vision of development that favours human well-being and environmental sustainability over a simplistic economic-output benchmark, and self-reliance over dependence.
- need to be revisited within the framework of a human rights approach to development, which pays attention to the root causes of poverty, 'injects' economic and social rights into discussions on poverty, and recognises the dehumanisation that has been inherent in development models thus far.<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, Odora Hoppers called on scientists to integrate these vital resources into their research on the alleviation of poverty.<sup>53 54</sup>

From a Caribbean perspective Louisy<sup>55</sup> pointed out the task of comparative education "which has always stressed the significance of context and circumstance ... to foster awareness of these elements that differentiate us." She noted that, in particular, the small states of the Caribbean risked marginalization and could benefit from comparative education initiatives "which would give greater international exposure to their particular circumstances."<sup>56</sup> She advocated a balance between the global interests and national interests when she stated:

In dealing with the challenges of the new global society, policy makers will constantly have to strike a balance between the imperative of responding to global infrastructural forces and the need to retain specific aspects of a nation's cultural heritage.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Odora Hoppers (2004), p. 8-9

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 8-9

<sup>54</sup> In this connection see also, Kubow "Teachers' Construction of Democracy: Intersection of Western and Indegenous Knowledge in South Africa and Kenya." In Comparative Education Review, vol. 51, no. 3, August 2007

<sup>55</sup> Louisy, "Globalisation and Comparative Education: a Caribbean Perspective." In Comparative Education, Volume 37, No. 4, 2001, pp. 425-438

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 425

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 427

In regard to the small Caribbean countries, Louisy supported the suggestion made by Jules<sup>58</sup> to develop "differentiation as a powerful tool for exploring global possibilities. Their Creole reality must be facilitated and treated as an asset."<sup>59</sup> Events in the course of history had transported to the Caribbean region many diverse people from distant places. Through enhanced activities, the study of this unique example of the integration of major civilizations could be offered in the field of comparative education.<sup>60</sup>

Yet another perspective on globalization is the concept of "multiple modernities." Reflecting upon this concept and its potential beyond academic discourse, Sachsenmaier<sup>61</sup> suggested that "a culturally pluralistic notion of modernity" had the potential to reduce the "growing tensions between Westernizers and anti-Western movements" by de-Westernizing the term modernity. Thus the concept of modernity could more easily be differentiated.<sup>62</sup>

As an ideal alternative, a world of multiple modernities would share normative standards to which different cultural experiences could contribute. It would not be a world of isolated civilizations or nation-states, but rather an open system in which different ways of being modern find the commonalities to interact creatively and understand themselves as part of a larger whole.<sup>63</sup>

Envisioning the prospects for a pluralistic world community based on multiple modernities, Jürgen Kocka<sup>64</sup> described how it gradually became "obvious that increasing interrelatedness did not necessarily mean growing similarity." Depending on the traditions of different cultures, different elements of modernity were "selected, redefined, and appropriated by the receiving culture."<sup>65</sup> In his article "Mutual Learning as an Agenda for Social Development,"<sup>66</sup> Tu Wei-Ming emphasized that "traditions are constituent parts of modernity and modernization can assume different cultural, institutional, structural and mental forms."<sup>67</sup> With this in mind, he called

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<sup>58</sup> Jules, "Kwéyol culture: Differentiation in a globalised context." Address delivered at the International Symposium on Creole Cultures, 28 October 1998, Roseau, Dominica

<sup>59</sup> Louisy, p. 433

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 437

<sup>61</sup> Sachsenmaier, "Multiple Modernities—The Concept and its Potential." In Sachsenmaier, Riedel, & Eisenstadt (Eds.), Reflections on Multiple Modernities: European, Chinese and Other Interpretations. 2002, pp. 42-67

<sup>62</sup> Sachsenmaier (2002), p. 43

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 63

<sup>64</sup> Kocka, Multiple Modernities and Negotiated Universals. In Sachsenmaier, Riedel, & Eisenstadt, pp. 119-128

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 122

<sup>66</sup> Tu, in Sachsenmaier, Riedel, & Eisenstadt, pp. 129-136

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 131

for a holistic approach to development, "We should accept a plurality of models of sustainable development and emphasize the ethical and spiritual dimensions of human flourishing as integral parts of our development strategy."<sup>68</sup> At the same time, he advocated "responsibility, civility, and compassion,"<sup>69</sup> and the transformation of the modern West from a "teaching civilization" into a society that possesses the "humility of a learning culture."<sup>70 71</sup>

## 2.3 Teachers in Developing Countries

While the above concepts of progress and inevitable scholarly debates hold both promise and disappointment for teachers in developing countries, the role of the teacher is universally recognized to be a key factor in the quality and success of educational progress. In spite of the critical value assigned to the teaching force component, however, no viable plan has been created to provide enough teachers to achieve the goals of "Education for All." Furthermore, the true nature of their individual roles, their daily struggles, and their often undervalued contributions remain unacknowledged and therefore not addressed. The following section introduces selected research about teachers and teacher training in several developing countries, whereas the implications of global concepts for Haitian rural teachers will be addressed in the final chapter (11.4).

### A Non-Formal Education Project in Bangladesh

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada conducted a series of case studies on successful alternative primary education programs and, in one of these studies, Haiplik investigated how the Bangladeshi BRAC<sup>72</sup> Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) program trained and developed its teachers.<sup>73</sup> In her publication, Haiplik introduced the BRAC NFPE program as "one of the longest running, largest and most successful" alternative primary education programs in the world.<sup>74</sup> She detailed the following key elements of the program:<sup>75</sup>

- The students attending the program's schools belonged to the poorest of the landless population.

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<sup>68</sup> Tu, p. 130

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 136

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 134

<sup>71</sup> In this connection see also Recknagel, Von der Entwicklungshilfe zum Dialog der Kulturen (2000).

<sup>72</sup> Formerly known as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

<sup>73</sup> Haiplik, An Educational Success Story from Bangladesh: Understanding the BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education Model and its Teacher Training and Development System. University of Toronto. Dissertation, 2004

<sup>74</sup> Haiplik, p. 373

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 10-11

- They were between 8 and 10 years old when they started school.
- Their homes were located within 1 km of their schools.
- To promote girls' education, the schools admitted 60% girls and 40% boys.
- The program covered grade 1 through grade 5 of the official school system within 4 years.
- The subjects taught were Bangla, maths, social studies, science, and English.
- The curricular objectives were the achievement of basic literacy, numeracy, and social awareness.
- The program fostered a learner-centered and participatory teaching method.
- The students' progress was continually measured by assessments and weekly and monthly tests, both oral and written; there were no formal annual examinations.
- The parents and community members were involved in school matters.
- The Program Organizers supervised the teachers and served as a link to the BRAC head office.

In this project, the teachers were local village women who had completed at least 9 years of schooling. They were hired on a temporary, part-time basis. The following teacher-training methods had been developed over time, through trial and error: After observing a BRAC teacher in their region for several days, new recruits participated in an intensive, twelve-day, basic pre-service training program at a residential training center. During this time period, five days were spent on concepts and seven days were allotted to role-playing lessons on the first grade level. Unlike the official teacher-training programs, these initial training sessions were "heavy on practice and lighter on theory."<sup>76</sup>

Additional training programs were conducted four to five days prior to the opening of a new school; refresher sessions took place on one or two days of every month; a six-day training course occurred at the beginning of every school year. These occasions served as an opportunity for the teachers to deepen their understanding of the program's learning concepts, to improve their teaching methods and to gain an overview of the curriculum for the next grade level. These continuous training sessions were combined with a very structured curriculum, daily lesson plans and learning materials in simple, modular form, and a strong participatory supervisory system.<sup>77</sup> According to Haiplik, this "hierarchically organized yet decentralized management structure" was able "to produce confident, capable paraprofessional teachers who can then provide relatively high quality basic education to the marginalized children in their care."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Haiplik, p. 12

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 12

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 374



Contextual factors<sup>79</sup> that contributed to the success of the program were its skilful adaptation to the particular culture of Bangladesh (including the aspects of tradition, religion, economy, and politics), its cumulative experiences of growing, innovating, experimenting, and developing since 1985,<sup>80</sup> and its effective mobilization of students, parents, community members, teachers, and staff who felt accountable and responsible to their local school.

Among the positive outcomes, Haiplik mentioned high attendance rates, a 95% program completion rate, and the fact that approximately 94% of the graduates enrolled in public secondary schools after completing a BRAC primary school.<sup>81</sup> In conclusion, Haiplik remarked:

The BRAC NFPE model, along with its vital teacher training and development component, is changing the lives of some of the poorest, hardest to reach children in the world. Dedicated village women are hired, efficiently trained and able to teach their students with a relatively high degree of success. Children are coming to school, learning and enjoying themselves in spite of the tremendous odds they face on a daily basis.<sup>82</sup>

### Teacher Identity in Benin

The impact of globalization on teacher identity in Benin was the subject of an investigation conducted by Welmond<sup>83</sup> who found these teachers in the midst of dilemma:

[They were] at the uncomfortable intersection of contradictory demands made on education systems. These demands come from all corners; from elite interests, from ambitious groups vying for social mobility, from ideological paradigms that frame the transformative function of education in different ways, from history, and from global forces.<sup>84</sup>

He examined the contradictions between the characteristics of the teacher identities influenced by the international development agency programs and the characteristics of the traditional identities comprising the nation's

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<sup>79</sup> Haiplik, p. 374-375

<sup>80</sup> The March 2007 BRAC report stated that, at that point in time 3.7 million students had graduated from BRAC schools and nearly one million children were receiving primary education in Bangladesh's 32,000 BRAC schools. [www.brac.net](http://www.brac.net)

<sup>81</sup> Haiplik, pp. 377-378

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 391

<sup>83</sup> Welmond, "Globalization Viewed from the Periphery: The Dynamics of Teacher Identity in the Republic of Benin," in *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 46, no.1, 2002, pp. 37-65, (This is an extract of his dissertation--Welmond, 2000)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 37

teacher corps. Welmond found that global pressure on the state to spend money allocated to education most efficiently often led to the decision to disregard moral and civic education but focus instead upon "measurable student achievement in core subject areas."<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the greatly indebted African states had been compelled by policies of structural adjustment to decrease teacher salaries during the 1980s and 1990s. Under international influence, educational quality was measured only in terms of efficiency, achievement, and control<sup>86</sup>, and the teachers' roles had been devalued to mere human capital concerns.

In contrast to the global construct of appropriate teacher characteristics, Welmond compiled a profile of the characteristics of Beninese teachers as identified by themselves and their society. From archival research and interviews with key informants, Welmond developed a multifaceted depiction of teachers. In Benin's history, teaching had constituted a "capricious springboard for those seeking social mobility" while, at the same time, "different categories of teachers with different levels of compensation and status" always worked side by side. A revolutionary intermezzo, during which 5,000 "young revolutionary teachers" were recruited, trained for one month and sent to primary schools throughout the country in the mid 1970s, could only provide low quality instruction and was eventually rejected. In the past, teachers in Benin had played important roles in mobilizing their compatriots against various regimes in power. However, their expectations of improved salaries after a successful change of government were often disappointed.<sup>87</sup>

From the responses of his informants, Welmond constructed a Beninese "teacher-identity landscape" in which a teacher was seen either as a custodian of knowledge (being) or as a practitioner of the art of passing on knowledge (doing). Another differentiation in the identities of teachers brought into question the individual's intrinsic motivation as either a member of the community who has recognized and acted upon a certain sense of responsibility to educate children or simply as an employee of the state doing her/his job. By combining the "being" or "doing" with the associated factor of either "community" or "state," Welmond defined four different traditional teacher identities in the form of cultural schemata:<sup>88</sup>

- The teacher as *phare* (beacon) possesses special knowledge and has a privileged position in the community. The children and the community show their respect to him and it is their responsibility to seek to acquire this knowledge.

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<sup>85</sup> Welmond, p. 40

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 42

<sup>87</sup> Quotes in this paragraph are taken from Welmond, p. 50.

<sup>88</sup> Quotes in this paragraph are taken from Welmond, pp. 53-54

- The teacher as *fonctionnaire* (civil servant) has privileged access to state and community resources as well as to a "host of peripheral entitlements, many of dubious legality."
- The teacher as *sacerdoce* (dedicated teacher) is a self-sacrificing, hard-working, moral example and a key contributor to the community. He is respected and given gifts for certain acts.
- The teacher as *efficace* (efficient teacher) concentrates on helping the children to pass their exams. No special benefits are connected to his work.

These different identities indicate that Beninese teachers have to negotiate their position between the community and the state. Most of Welmond's informants expressed that "today teachers fall considerable short of expectations as defined by the four schemata" and thus were considered "illegitimate." The teachers reaction to this reproach was to "portray themselves as victims." In order to gain credibility, assistant teachers began to work on their own qualifications in order to gain professional recognition as full teachers. Another popular strategy employed by many teachers in order to secure a better position was to assist certain political parties in return for compensation after the party gained office<sup>89</sup>.

While it would appear that the "efficient" teacher would be deemed most useful for globally-inspired policies, Welmond clarified, "In the case of Benin, however, the emphasis is on exam success for the purposes of social mobility and screening rather than on student learning for higher economic productivity."<sup>90</sup> As pressure to provide more access to education is applied, the state's traditional strategy--slowing the growth of existing teachers' salaries and hiring a new cohort of lesser paid teachers lured by the promise of better pay in the future--would most likely be used to fund the changes necessary to achieve the goal of "Education for All." This would, however, inevitably produce an embittered teaching corps and political instability as promises could not be fulfilled.

Welmond suggested that policymakers be aware of these "historically grounded and widely accepted notions of teacher rights and responsibilities" and attend to them in reform attempts. In view of the contradictions between child-centered pedagogical methods and the *phare* schema, Welmond remarked, "Transforming what it means to be a prestigious, feared and respected teacher ... to include child-centered pedagogical approaches will necessarily represent a long-term goal." Nevertheless, he maintained, in order for improvement of the Beninese education system to be sustained, the "centrality for teachers of being treated with respect" had to be seriously considered.<sup>91 92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Welmond, pp. 54-55

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 58

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 60-62

## Reform and Reality of Caribbean Teacher Training

Jennings<sup>93</sup> examined teacher training programs in different countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean in order to measure their performance in the following areas: the improvement of literacy and numeracy, the development of multilingual skills, the utilization of student-centered teaching, the teaching of low achievers with a special focus upon male underachievement, and the application of technology as an aid to teaching and learning. These priority areas had been identified for urgent attention during two regional conferences in 1997, first in Barbados by the region's ministers of education and next in the 18<sup>th</sup> Heads of Government Conference in Jamaica. Improved teacher education was regarded as the key toward the realization of these goals.

The actual outcome of the teacher training fell quite short of the expectations inspired by these ambitious plans. In Guyana, the number of qualified teachers had decreased over the recent years; in Belize, only 47% and, in Dominica, only 54% of the primary school teachers had a teaching certificate. However, Trinidad, Tobago, and Barbados had achieved a fully trained teaching force. In some countries, many teachers had left the profession because of low remuneration which created serious shortages. At times, the teacher-training institutions in Guyana even lowered their entry requirements in order to attract applicants. On the other hand, teachers in Guyana also claimed that "strong examination orientation kept them from implementing knowledge and skills they had gained in the training."<sup>94</sup> Newly trained teachers in Belize complained that their principals were not open to child-centered teaching methods.

The education systems of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries are, for the most part, modelled upon those of Great Britain. Jennings' investigation, which involved interviews with key members of the education systems and document analysis across 8 countries (Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago), confirmed a match between the primary-level curriculum guides and the programs in the teacher-training institutions. In most countries, training that focused on teaching low achievers was either insufficient or

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<sup>92</sup> In his investigation of local teachers' response to centrally planned curriculum changes in Indonesia (Indonesian Education: Teachers, Schools, and Central Bureaucracy, 2006), Bjork comes to similar conclusions. In this case the traditional role of the teacher as "civil servant" was in the way of the prescribed innovations. Both studies reveal that it is important to appreciate historical grown local teacher identities.

<sup>93</sup> Jennings, "Teacher Education in Selected Countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean: the ideal of policy versus the reality of practice." *Comparative Education*, Volume 37, No.1, 2001, pp. 107-134

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 108

non-existent; only in St. Lucia, did this constitute an important part of the teacher-training curriculum. The integration of new technology was inadequate in most countries. Only the graduates from the teachers' college in Barbados were satisfied with their training in this field. Concerning the role of the teacher, most trainees identified the teacher as the giver and organiser of knowledge and the manager of the learning process. In addition, the prescription of detailed centralized curricula was perceived by many as a contradiction to creative, child-centered pedagogy. One principal of a college for teachers referred to the "cultural preference among students of being lectured to and talked down to."

Another aspect of child-centered pedagogy, the "restriction on corporal punishment by teachers has put limitations on the ability of many schools in the Caribbean to maintain discipline." In Jennings' interviews with teachers these "expressed concern over the apparent breakdown of the family structure and the inability of many single parents to control the behaviour of their children; they were fearful both of the verbal and physical abuse which they had seen meted out to teachers by parents and children." Jennings refers to instances where disciplinary measures taken by a school against students had been overruled by the ministry of education. The ministries typically delegated the problem by requiring "teachers' colleges to ensure that teachers were appropriately trained to teach low achievers with whom, in many instances, disciplinary problems are associated, but at the same time they deprive these teachers of the power to discipline."<sup>95</sup>

A contrast between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of practice became apparent in a number of areas<sup>96</sup>. The learner-centered teaching methods were neither taught nor practised in teacher-training programs. Furthermore, the dearth of resources in the classroom (e.g., not enough textbooks, lack of teaching material) reinforced the teachers' traditional habit of giving copious notes for memorization. The area most lacking in the teacher-training programs, however, was the application of new

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<sup>95</sup> Jennings, pp. 128-129

<sup>96</sup> Contrasts between the rhetoric of educational reform programs and the reality of school practice are identified in several studies. Niedrig (2004) documented the insufficient realization of the "additive approach to bilingualism"—i.e. to maintain homelanguage(s) while providing access to ... additional language(s)—in South African schools in spite of its official proclamation in the Ministry of Education's Language in Education Policy (p. 86). Cordova de Hernichel (2000) criticized the Bolivian government for not respecting the legal commitment to include the rural Amerindians in the development of educational reform programs (pp. 207-217). Makuwira (2004) related how the participatory approach of a nongovernmental development organization in a basic education initiative in Malawi was only at the surface. In contrast to what was proclaimed, the intended beneficiaries had not much influence on the program.

technology since even the training institutes lacked computers. Male underachievement proved to be rooted in societal issues--"school ending in unemployment, the feminisation of the school system, general absence of male role models in the classrooms."<sup>97</sup> According to Jennings, the inclusion of gender issues in the curricula of teacher training would have little effect if the underlying causes were not addressed.

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<sup>97</sup> Jennings, p. 130

### 3 Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology is introduced, definitions of key concepts are provided, and a description of the research process is included. Furthermore, the methods used for the collection and analysis of data are specified. The last section is a reflection on the limitations of this research.

#### 3.1 Theoretical Considerations

In contradiction to the positivist stance that applied the same standards to both natural science and social science, the development of qualitative research was based upon the conviction that human beings cannot be adequately represented by quantitative analysis and outside observation alone. Vulliamy<sup>98</sup> lists the common criteria used in qualitative research strategy as: the "focus on meanings," the conduction of the research "in natural settings," the generation of "hypotheses and theories from the data that emerge ... rather than testing preconceived hypotheses," the focus "on the process of social interaction," and the attempt "to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour." The end result of the integration of these criteria is that "qualitative research tends to incorporate a wide variety of specific research techniques, even within one research project."<sup>99</sup>

Vulliamy argues that, in developing countries, the use of qualitative research techniques may be "especially suited to the early stages of the implementation of an innovation"<sup>100</sup> in order to gain a more precise understanding of the actual conditions in the educational field designated for innovation. Vulliamy further explains:

To have a good chance of success, educational policies or innovations, whether initiated by national policy-makers or by international organizations, need to be tuned to the everyday realities of the classroom and to the motivations and capabilities of ordinary teachers.<sup>101</sup>

My decision to use a qualitative research approach was based upon the pragmatic consideration that the in-service teacher-training programs in Haiti must be designed to respond directly to the educational backgrounds and everyday challenges of the teachers to be trained. To achieve a more

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<sup>98</sup> Vulliamy, Lewin, & Stephens. Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries: Qualitative Strategies. (1990)

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 17

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 17

holistic perspective, the existing statistics about teachers' educational level, years of teaching, salaries, additional occupations, etc., need to be complemented by a description and analysis of the lives of the individual teachers. In this sense, I hope to offer a contribution to the broader understanding of the struggle of rural Haitian teachers. For this, I rely upon William James' pragmatic method which "appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be *changed*. *Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest.*"<sup>102</sup>

Almost a century after the publication of William James' lecture "What Pragmatism Means" from which the above quote is taken, Richard Rorty developed his version of pragmatism in which solidarity plays a prominent role.

In my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognized by clearing away "prejudice" or burrowing down to previously hidden depths but, rather, as a goal to be achieved. It is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. ... This process of coming to see other human beings as "one of us" rather than as "them" is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of redescription of what we ourselves are like.<sup>103</sup>

The attempt to communicate with people who are in challenging circumstances inevitably leads to a broadening of one's perspective. This is especially true if the interchange crosses distinct boundaries of culture. To avoid misinterpretation, it is necessary to maintain an open, unbiased approach to the unfamiliar culture. In his book about intercultural philosophy R. A. Mall<sup>104</sup> suggests a philosophical attitude without prejudice toward other cultures and philosophies that does not privilege any locality, system of concepts, or language.<sup>105</sup> Instead of projecting our own perceptions and attitudes onto other cultures and philosophies, Mall proposes an interpretation that respects and appreciates the differences of the unfamiliar "other" and is in search of commonalities.

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<sup>102</sup> James, *Pragmatism and The Meaning of Truth*. 1975, p. 32

<sup>103</sup> Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. 1989, p. xvi

<sup>104</sup> Mall, *Philosophie im Vergleich der Kulturen*. 1995, pp. 1-3

<sup>105</sup> See also: Mall, "The Concept of an Intercultural Philosophy"  
<http://them.polylog.org/1/fmr-en.htm>



In his introduction to Gaston's resource handbook, Cultural Awareness Teaching Techniques (1992), Clark defines the concept of cultural awareness, as it is used in the book:

Cultural awareness can be seen as the recognition that culture affects perception and that culture influences values, attitudes and behavior. The development of this awareness can be described as having four sequential stages leading ideally toward toleration and appreciation of cultural diversity.<sup>106</sup>

The first stage is described as the recognition of the foreign culture combined with a more conscious recognition of our own cultural heritage. To cope with this ambiguity, a non-judgemental attitude of acceptance is suggested as a second stage. The following stage requires that we step out of our ethnocentric point of view and allow ourselves to become bicultural beings which involves "not only projecting ourselves into the role of a person in the target culture, but it also requires a willingness to let go of our close identity with our native culture." In the final stage of transcendence, we have ideally developed "a set of skills that can be labelled **the ability to respect**" which allows each of us to become "a citizen of the world, searching for universals but also valuing the vitality and variety of earth's cultures."<sup>107</sup> However, there still exists a difference between the ability to respect differences and the sharing of understandings. Reflections on the limitations of research in Haiti across cultures are offered in the last section of this chapter.

In order to clarify the concepts central to the research question, the following definitions, framed within the context of this research, are provided:

**Education:** In accordance with UNESCO's "International Standard Classification of Education" (ISCED) the term education is defined as comprising "all deliberate and systematic activities designed to meet learning needs." In particular "education is understood to involve organized and sustained communication designed to bring about learning." It is a broad concept which "embraces both initial education at the early stages of a person's life prior to entry into the world of work, as well as continuing education throughout a persons's life."<sup>108</sup> In connection with this research the term includes the schooling, the teacher training, and any type of on-the-job training or in-service teacher training the teachers might have experienced.

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<sup>106</sup> Gaston, p. 2

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 2-5

<sup>108</sup> The ISCED can be found in: <http://portal.unesco.org/education> (quotes are taken from paragraph 7 and 12)

**Daily routine:** This term refers to what a teacher normally experiences during a school day, from morning to night. Beyond the challenges of teaching under difficult circumstances, the daily fight for survival is included in this concept.

**Prospects:** This word refers to the professional career goals that the primary school teachers hope to achieve in their future, as well as to concepts these teachers have about their socio-economic advancement. Furthermore the term encompasses the teachers' attitude toward long-term commitment in their profession and the options that society may provide to current long-term teachers.

**Primary School Teacher:** This term refers to anyone who teaches in a primary school, regardless of the training or level of education previously attained. In Haiti, primary school includes two cycles: The first cycle is from 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and the second includes both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. No distinction is made between teachers who work in public or private schools or in schools with or without a license. However, the focus of this research is directed at the majority of primary school teachers who teach in disadvantaged schools.

**Rural and urban:** The characteristics that distinguish rural from urban localities vary from nation to nation. Such distinctions are based upon criteria such as the number of inhabitants,<sup>109</sup> the population density, the presence or absence of administration, the provision of public services, the presence of paved roads and electrical service, and the percentage of agricultural activities. Some nations designate only their capital city as urban and all other localities as rural. The Haitian definition of urban localities includes every administrative community center.<sup>110</sup> According to this standard, the remote town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, which has no paved roads or electricity, is considered urban. Albeit I am aware of the differences between towns that are community centers and the surrounding villages, in the context of this dissertation, I do not follow the official Haitian definition but, instead, consider a rural locality to be that which is characterized by remoteness in combination with a prevalence of agricultural activities. My perspective has been shaped by European urban concepts and by impressions formed while experiencing Haitian cities such as Port-au-Prince or Cap-Haïtien. At the same time, I understand and

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<sup>109</sup> Some countries define a locality with more than 200 or 400 inhabitants as urban, in other countries a locality needs to have 10,000 or 50,000 inhabitants before it is called urban.

<sup>110</sup> The different definitions of "urban" can be found in the UN Demographic Yearbook 2001, Table 6

acknowledge the perspective of villagers who consider Baie-de-Saint-Pierre a big city.<sup>111</sup>

### 3.2 The Research Process

Finally, since much of qualitative design must take place in the field, it necessarily has an artistic and intuitive side, if not the appearance of a haphazard one. The evaluator never knows exactly what he or she will find and must be ready to put whatever the context reveals to good use.<sup>112</sup>

The initial phase of fieldwork, "a period of general observation: specific problems and foci have not yet been determined,"<sup>113</sup> began while I lived in Haiti, as I conducted the investigation into the accessibility of schooling to Haitian children and as I tried to understand my own experiences and observations. It continued as I taught at Quisqueya University in Port-au-Prince, where discussions about the Haitian education system took place in class, including the observations and opinions of students after class field trips to educational institutions. Without being recorded, these experiences contributed to the analysis of my data (making sense of what was said and observed), which lead to new questions and the need to collect more specific data.

A second phase of research emerged, "marked by greater attention to particular aspects of the field"<sup>114</sup>, as the need for specific data evolved into the concept of interviews with specific questions. I began interviewing some of my students, extending in-class discussions. This process yielded data of a different quality that was grounded in the students' own experiences and depended upon the extent to which they had been involved in teaching or teacher training. I was able to conduct a few more interviews with experts in the field during this second phase, but, during that summer of 2001, it became necessary for my family to return to Germany although my research was still in progress.

When I terminated our living arrangement in November 2001, I believed that I would soon return to Haiti. However, in 2002, the country's political situation became increasingly unstable. Gang fights between those supporting President Aristide and those in favor of a change in government

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<sup>111</sup> See Marcelin's explanations how he felt, when he first came to Baie-de-Saint Pierre in 10.2.1.

<sup>112</sup> Easton, Sharpening our Tools: improving Evaluation in Adult and Nonformal Education. 1997, p. 177

<sup>113</sup> Strauss, Qualitative Analysis in Social Research: Grounded Theory Methodology. Part One: Data, Data Collection and Qualitative Analysis. 1984a, p. 24

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 25

spread throughout every city. Finally, in February 2004, Aristide was forced to leave the country, and a transitional government backed by the US was established. The UN sent peacekeeping forces to help to stabilize the country and prepare for new elections. Although my field research was delayed, I continued to research using available literature and kept abreast of the latest developments in Haiti, waiting for the moment that I would be able to return.

In 2005, as Haiti settled into a more peaceful state, I was accepted into a teacher-training project to be located in a town in northern Haiti. The project leaders agreed to let me split my time between their project and my own research. The Haitian teachers who were to be trained had registered, all foreign participants had submitted their teaching programs, a teaching site and accommodations were arranged, and we all had booked our flights. We were to meet in Florida, in the US, and fly together to Haiti. I had planned to stay in Haiti one additional week beyond what was required for the teacher-training project in order to conduct further interviews and observations. After that, I planned to spend another week in Florida to do research in the libraries of different universities.

When the project was cancelled at the last minute because of Haiti's renewed political unrest and kidnappings, I used my ticket to Florida and spent one month visiting the libraries of different universities in Miami, Gainesville and Tallahassee. I focused my search on educational, anthropological and social research studies of Haiti. I was excited to find some recent studies about life in rural Haiti as well as a large collection of older research. When I read through the collections of dissertations and studies, I realized that I had to find a way to interview the teachers in Haiti's countryside and that I must develop more clarity of focus within the planned interviews. I also became aware that it would be beneficial to conduct pilot interviews in order to test the questions and learn what might be improved upon. At that time, however, I had not arrived at a practical way to accomplish this goal. While visiting "Little Haiti" in Miami and talking with the residents, I did realize that I should refresh and improve my Creole. When I returned to Germany, I took lessons in Creole from a Haitian friend as I waited for an other opportunity to join a project in the Haitian countryside.

As I reflected upon my findings in the libraries and related them to my own previous experiences, I formed a plan that included the design of an interview guideline that would target specific points of interest, to be used in the upcoming field research. Thus began the last phase of the research which "consists of systematic effort to pinpoint various hypotheses and to integrate the total analysis."<sup>115</sup> The plan was further developed, based upon the results of pilot interviews that a Haitian friend conducted for me

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<sup>115</sup> Strauss (1984a), p. 25

in Port-au-Prince. These results allowed me to improve and refine my interview guideline.

Finally, in July 2006, the teacher-training project was revived and with it the opportunity to re-enter the field. To ensure the most secure location possible, the project was moved to a remote coastal town, Baie-de-Saint-Pierre.<sup>116</sup> As had been agreed upon in the previous arrangement, I was to split my time between teaching and doing my research. Both activities involved orientation, observation, communication, reflection, and adaptation. The limitation of a two-week time period necessitated a very efficient and concerted research effort, and I recognized that I would not be able to contact any of my informants after leaving the site. Thus, it was absolutely crucial that the analysis and identification of the internal logic of what had been said in each interview be performed immediately and accurately so that any questionable data could be clarified on-site with the subjects. It was during these interviews, that the recurring themes of "delay" and "drudgery" emerged as two distinct components of all of the teachers' lives. A more detailed analysis and integration of all findings was to follow upon my return to Germany.

### **3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis**

At the beginning of this research project, I opted for a qualitative approach without committing myself to the details yet. After returning in 2001 to Germany, however, I became more involved in Grounded Theory and realized my affinity for this style of research. From the project's inception, inquiry and reflection had developed synergistically and together determined the respective next step; "the analysis and collection of data go on in tandem, beginning with the very first interview or interviews."<sup>117</sup>

My research included data that already existed in written form and data that initially existed only in the minds of people whose experiences had to be translated into written form after observation and inquiry (generation of data). During the entire process, I searched for existing written data, although there were periods of time when the generation of data was the more important focus. In my quest for relevant literature, I visited the following locations: in Port-au-Prince--the library of Quisqueya University, the library of USAID, the library of the *Institut Français*, the national library *Bibliothèque Nationale*, the library of the UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, FONHEP (organisation of private schools in Haiti); in Florida--the Otto G. Richter Library at the University of Miami, the Latin American and Caribbean Information Center at the Florida International University in Miami, the Latin American Collection of the George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida in Gainesville, the Robert Manning Strozier

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<sup>116</sup> The name has been changed to ensure the anonymity of my informants.

<sup>117</sup> Strauss (1984a), p. 22

Library at Florida State University in Tallahassee. In Germany main places for literature research were the library of the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* in Berlin, different libraries of the *Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* and the *Deutsche Nationalbibliothek* in Frankfurt.

The process of examining existing literature for relevant written data involved checking the library catalogues for studies of interest, going to the shelves and getting the books (if it was a library with free access to the books, otherwise engaging in the required procedure), looking for similar literature in close proximity, skimming through the selected studies and books to discern which parts should be read carefully and handwritten into notes or photocopied, and then, once home again, organizing the notes and copies for easy access.

In addition to library research, online research proved to be invaluable. Haiti's presence on the World Wide Web has increased dramatically over the last ten years and allows international access to a large amount of information about Haiti. One forum from which I gathered many facts and much inspiration was "Bob Corbett's Haiti list."<sup>118</sup> This e-mail list has provided information, opinions and comments to its subscribers on a regular basis since 1996. Additionally, in 2006, the daily paper in Port-au-Prince, *Le Nouvelliste*, made its publication available online.<sup>119</sup>

Qualitative approaches capitalize on the human faculty for perceiving pattern and discerning meaning. Rather than being defined rigidly in advance, variables, indicators and theories *emerge* from the inquiry as the researchers gain an appreciation of what they and stakeholders see as key factors.<sup>120</sup>

My four years' stay in Haiti was predestined for the generation of data through observations and conversations with people. After a rather incidental approach of informants in the period of general observation a more focused choice of informants followed when I started to interview my students at Quisqueya University. Since my research focused on teachers, one precondition was that the informant was already working as a teacher, director or teacher-trainer. Another criterion in the selection process was the presence of commitment and competence as demonstrated during in-class discussions or while giving a presentation. One additional point of contingency was availability (both mine and the informant's) within the constraints of schedule and location, since I had to schedule interview appointments before or after my classes. Those students who came earlier or remained after class were among those more likely to be chosen. I was most interested, however, in interviewing those students who had already

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<sup>118</sup> It can be subscribed by mail to corbetre@webster.edu

<sup>119</sup> [www.lenouvelliste.com](http://www.lenouvelliste.com)

<sup>120</sup> Easton, p. 176

worked with a teacher-training project. If a student mentioned about teacher-training experiences during class, I made sure to arrange an interview with her or him. These interviews were conducted outside in the yard or in a classroom of Quisqueya University. The atmosphere was usually friendly, relaxed and filled with mutual curiosity. Technical details for these and all other interviews can be found in the table at the end of this section.

A different selection process had occurred when the students chose their courses and happened to find themselves in my class. All of the students that I asked for an interview were enrolled in one of my courses. Long before I held these courses a selection or "filtering" had already occurred because these students had been able to complete their schooling and to find a way to enrol in one of the best private universities in the country; they were among those select few who had the ability to pay the fees or had qualified for a scholarship. To ascertain their preconditions for engaging in educational studies, one of my questions was directed at discovering the circumstances that had allowed them access to university studies. I also conducted an interview with Prof. Paul of Quisqueya University's education department (see 8.2). He had supervised a teacher-training project in which several of my students had participated and offered a different perspective.

After reflecting upon the content of these interviews, I determined that I needed data obtained directly from rural teachers and those involved with teacher-training in the countryside. At the time, one of our neighbours was Inspector Fernand, who had been supervising and training teachers in a remote area of Haiti over the past 19 years. Although he was seldom home, I was finally able to interview him in May 2001, when he was in Port-au-Prince for training (see 8.2).

In preparation for the interviews that I would conduct during the project in July 2006, I arranged for a Haitian friend of mine, Maurice, to do a few pilot interviews. Maurice lived in Germany but was going to spend a few months in Haiti during the spring of 2006. I compiled a set of questions that I intended to use in my interviews with the teachers attending the training project, and asked that he specifically interview teachers from disadvantaged primary schools. When he returned to Germany, I interviewed him about his experience. As I had requested, he had tried to arrange interviews with teachers from disadvantaged schools. In spite of his efforts, however, he was either not given an appointment or the prospective informant did not keep the appointment. As an alternative, he found teachers among a group of people with whom he was already acquainted. A result of selecting from this group was that the four teachers whom he interviewed were from schools that were not as disadvantaged as I had intended. His interviews took place in their schools, or in the house in which he or a friend lived.

The purpose of the pilot interviews was to test and discover how the questions might be improved and to observe whether any additional themes might emerge. One of the teachers he interviewed introduced the

subject of corporal punishment which had been discussed in a teacher-training session that she had recently attended. From this incidental contribution, I realized two things: I should incorporate this subject into my research and I had to do so cautiously and indirectly. I felt sure that, if I had conducted the interview, the teacher would have been more restrained for fear of jeopardising her teaching position or in an attempt to make a good impression. After some reflection, I decided that it might be less threatening to ask, instead, if the teachers had ever seen another teacher at their school hitting a child. The other important lesson learned from the pilot interviews regarded the arrangement of the questions. In each interview, the sequence of themes flowed arbitrarily, and so some time-related facts were not made clear, e.g. the amount of time needed by each teacher to complete her or his education. I took this to be an indication that the sequence of questions should be arranged more deliberately to minimize confusion, and decided to place fact-related questions before the narrative part of the interview.

The revised sequence of topics to be covered in each interview began with a set of short, fact-related questions about the teacher's personal and educational background, their entrance into the teaching profession, and their family situation. This was followed by questions that invited narration on topics like: childhood experiences, the nature and events of a typical day spent teaching, the income from teaching and the need for supplementary income, and the needs of their school. The remaining part of the interview focused upon their hopes and expectations of the future and upon their perception of corporal punishment. Even with this refined sequence of questions, important facts were still not made absolutely clear, in particular, the total time required to complete their own education, since most informants tended not to address the delays. After recognizing this complication, I tried to clarify this point as much as possible during the interviews.

Some of the informants were reluctant to speak openly, so their narrative parts were quite short; others spoke freely. In the afternoons I replayed the taped interviews and summarized them. This required in-depth reflection upon what was said and the making of notes regarding anything unclear. Then I arranged a second appointment with each informant in order to verify the content of the first interview and to resolve any confusion. Depending upon how much clarification was needed, I either made notes or taped this second conversation. When I conducted the first interview with Marcelin, I had forgotten to include the question regarding the practice of corporal punishment in his school, so I asked this question during the verification. Of all the interviews, this particular session produced the most open and honest response regarding corporal punishment.

The process of examining the data, reflecting upon the significance, and deciding what points should be further discussed was definitely influenced by my earlier experiences in Haiti. I was reminded of a girl that I interviewed in 1997 (see 1.1), when I learned that one of the teachers, Bernadette, had worked as a *restavèk* ("child servant") for several years



when she was a child. She elaborated upon this experience only after I asked for more information during the verification of the first interview. In several of these verification sessions, the informants were able to talk about themselves in greater detail than before. Much to my regret, a time constraint at the end of the project prevented me from completing the verification of 2 of the 13 original interviews.

It took several days of observing and working with the teachers<sup>121</sup> who were participating in the training project before I felt confident enough to choose my interview partners. I selected the informants on the basis of their apparent sincerity as evidenced by their commitment and attitude in class. Another criterion for some of the informants was that they have a background of limited education, and so I sought out several less-educated teachers. There were some teachers who made a very sincere effort but had great difficulty comprehending the content of the training.

Sincerity was chosen as a primary criterion for selection of teacher informants because I assumed that this quality was necessary to the success of any teacher-training project. Those who design such projects must have a thorough understanding of the educational backgrounds and the professional and social circumstances from which the teachers have come, but equally important is that the participant teachers be sincerely interested in developing new teaching strategies and expanding their knowledge. All of the teachers from whom I requested an interview had displayed a high degree of sincerity. Since I preferred to have a flexible approach, I also agreed to allow any of these informants to bring along a friend who wanted to be interviewed and I welcomed any other teacher who approached me with the desire to be interviewed. These volunteers provided for deviations and contrast to those who were selected.

On another level, the assembly of teachers participating in the training project had been selectively influenced by an unforeseen external force. As described in 9.3, the insecure state of the country necessitated a relocation of the project site and this had required the delegation of preparations to a local contact. I later learned from the project leaders that this contact had influenced the selection of participants by limiting the extent to which both knowledge of and access to the project were made available. Only the directors of local schools chosen by the contact had received invitations. It was from these particular schools that most of the teachers attending had come, based upon the recommendations of their directors. Other local school directors did not receive an invitation, even though they too would have been interested in sending their teachers. Moreover, the contact arranged for a radio announcement about the project that contained misinformation, the result of which was that teachers from surrounding

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<sup>121</sup> I was teaching in two classes of about 30 teachers each, both of which were attended by teachers that taught the first cycle of primary school.

villages came when the project began, without previous registration. Although these teachers were accepted, confirmation of their current status as a working teacher from one of the present directors was required in order to receive their certificate of completion. This local contact had also made questionable arrangements for the accommodation of the foreign staff and so his involvement with the project had been terminated. The fact that my role as a representative of the project would probably have interfered with an open dialogue with this contact combined with the fact that my time was so limited had the overall effect of eliminating him from my list of interview candidates.

The registration process also involved the placement of the teachers into classes that corresponded with their level of teaching. Some of those teachers who had been teaching on several different levels alternated between different classes during the first days of the project. The group from which I selected my informants was composed of teachers currently working in one of the local primary schools; they had been chosen by their directors to attend the seminar or had decided to do so of their own volition after hearing about the project through the radio or some other source.

Before I began to interview the teachers, I had the good fortune to be introduced to the chief inspector of the Baie-de-Saint-Pierre school district. This was an unexpected opportunity for an expert interview. I would have preferred to have been better prepared, but I had brought my tape recorder and questions about the test administered at end of primary school, and a few other issues that needed clarification. The data provided in this interview added to the general picture of the teachers' working conditions.

The directors who attended the project were subject to the same registration process as the teachers; however, they had more freedom of choice. They could attend the project alone, send some of their teachers instead, or do both. At the end of a meeting with the directors one afternoon I asked if those who were directors of primary schools in the town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre would stay a little longer for an additional short inquiry, nine directors stayed for the first group interview. The next afternoon, during another meeting for all of the directors, I asked those primary school directors who had not attended the additional interview held the day before to stay afterward for an inquiry as well. Seven primary school directors from nearby villages remained afterward for the second interview.

The purpose of the two group interviews with the directors was to obtain specific facts and figures about their careers, their schools, the fees that their students had to pay, and the salaries that their teachers received. Only one question about the problems encountered in their schools required narration. An open exchange occurred between the directors that seemed to be of an honest and trusting nature, though whether or not everyone spoke the truth cannot be verified. The data generated in these interviews served as a background for the more detailed picture of the

teachers' lives. One of the responses to the question regarding problems encountered in the schools aroused my curiosity, and I later asked this director (Theophil) for an individual interview, after which, another director (Kettner, who was actually a primary school teacher and vice-director) volunteered to be interviewed as well.

On the last day of the seminar, after the graduation ceremony, all the local teachers left, and the foreign staff teachers were preparing for their own departure the next morning. Under these circumstances, I tried to interview as many of the foreign teachers as possible. Depending on the individual's state of affairs, some of these interviews were profound reflections upon the project experience, others were quite brief. I conducted eight interviews in the house in which we stayed and two more during the next morning in a waiting area at the airport in Port-au-Prince. The data generated from these interviews provided another perspective on the seminar experience and on the Haitian teachers that had participated.

Before each interview, I explained my research project and assured anonymity to my informants. In the previous interviews with Quisqueya University students, I had explained that this was my own project and was completely unrelated to my work at the university. At the teacher-training project, it was officially announced to all the teachers and directors that I was doing a research project independent of my work with the training project. To every informant, I explained that the purpose of my research was to create a better understanding of the challenges in Haitian teachers' lives that would ultimately inspire and facilitate improvement. I also explained to my informants that I would contact them again for verification of the interview.

All of the interviews that I conducted were tape-recorded. After every interview I wrote down an interview protocol which included the time, place and observations made before, during, or after the interview, and how the interview was arranged. During periods of intensive research, I kept a research journal, a logbook, and continuous notes and memos.

I transcribed the interviews with my university students in French and translated into English the parts that were included in chapter 8. The expert interviews were transcribed in French, translated in their entirety into English and can be found in Appendix A. I transcribed the 2006 training project interviews with Haitian teachers and directors directly into English, with the exception of some sections that were difficult to understand. These were noted in Creole and translated into English after verifying the meaning with Haitian friends. Foreign staff interviews were conducted in English and I transcribed the parts relevant for inclusion in chapters 9 and 10. Short profiles of the Haitian teachers and of the foreign staff teachers can be found in Appendix B.

The process of analysis involved coding the interviews with the Haitian teachers at the seminar, paragraph by paragraph. In order to visualize the properties of the emerging themes, I noted the codes on small cards adding numbers that would correspond to the respective paragraphs in the

interview transcripts. The cards were then arranged on a board according to theme, or as part of a theme, so that those with similar codes were placed in one area in a sensible order. With the help of this graphic organizer, I determined the theme descriptions. To save the arrangements as pinned on the board, I made a sketch of each.

Table 1: Technical Data of the Interviews

When?	Who?	Where?	Number?	How long?	Which language?
May and June 2001	Students of the education department	Quisqueya University. Port-au-Prince, Haiti	20	Between 15 and 30 minutes	French and English
May 17, 2001	Inspector Fernand	Delmas, Haiti, at his home	1	20 minutes	French
Nov. 8, 2001	Professor Paul	Quisqueya University at his office	1	20 minutes	French
May 2006	Teachers	Port-au-Prince, Haiti	4	Between 30 and 45 minutes	Creole
June 2006	Maurice, who conducted pilot interviews	Gießen, Germany	1	15 minutes	German
July 2006	Directors participating in project	Baie-de-St-Pierre, Haiti	15 (in 2 groups)	30 and 40 minutes	French
July 2006	Teachers participating in project	Baie-de-St-Pierre, Haiti	13	Between 20 and 60 minutes	French and Creole
July 2006	Foreign staff teachers	Baie-de-St-Pierre, Haiti	10	Between 10 and 45 minutes	English
July 2006	Inspector Hyppolite	Baie-de-St-Pierre, Haiti	1	25 minutes	French

### 3.4 Limitations

Simply by being white, in Haiti I was perceived to be different at a glance. When moving about in public, I had to come to terms with being defined as wealthy on the basis of my fair skin. A natural consequence of this perception was that people often approached me for money. Usually this was done in a friendly but insistent manner so that it became necessary to find an appropriate way to respond. The more Creole I learned, the more able I was to deal with this situation.

This redefinition inspired some people to even more subtle and peculiar strategies, like the pastor who invited me to visit (and possibly support) his orphanage, which was actually an ad hoc gathering of children from his neighborhood. It was according to a similar logic that the local contact in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre redefined the teacher-training project as an event that could provide the funding needed to complete the construction of his house (see 9.3). Creative negotiations aimed at benefiting from perceived opportunities were enacted on many different levels. In this context, Van der Zaag<sup>122</sup>, who researched competing concepts of development in a rural Haitian community, concludes,

My analysis has certainly shown how women and men in rural Haiti have reinterpreted outside, idealist discourses and programs of empowerment and capacity building in terms of pragmatic local strategies of survival and 'working the system.'<sup>123</sup>

As a researcher, he also felt trapped in this dissonance, and noted,

Throughout the field research, I was very aware of the relations of power, differences in identity, and the encounter of knowledges between myself and local people, and these seemed to make any easy participation and sharing of understandings impossible.<sup>124</sup>

Coming from North America or Europe to rural Haiti presents no easy means of achieving a mutual understanding with the local population, given the immense cultural, social and economic disparities. Moreover, a chequered history of past encounters with powerful northern "idealism," though marked with an occasional positive outcome, has more than once proven to have disastrous effects upon rural Haiti (see 4.2 and 4.3). In the face of this disregard, who can deny her a healthy resistance? Ultimately, the only way to bridge this gulf of mistrust is to engage in a culturally

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<sup>122</sup> Vander Zaag, "We Do Not Yet Have Development": Encounters of Development Knowledges, Identities and Practices in a NGO Program in Rural Haiti. Dissertation, 1999. For a summary of his findings see 5.4.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 331

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 303

sensitive approach directed toward the development of cooperative relations and perhaps even friendships. In these relationships, the different identities and "knowledges" will learn from each other and expand to accommodate the unfamiliar, provided that the efforts of both sides are marked by sincerity and respect.

Being associated with a well-received project in the community of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre certainly had a positive effect on how I was received as a researcher. Amidst the introduction and experimentations around child-centered learning during the seminar, the Haitian teachers and the foreign staff were very busy but had a lot of fun together, and our relationships developed quite naturally. During interviews, the limitation of my "otherness" was offset to a degree by the simplicity of my questions. I explored the teachers' educational and family backgrounds, their daily activities, and their expectations and hopes for the future. I knew that they would be reluctant to talk about corporal punishment since, as a representative of the project, I was associated with discouraging this practice. Considering the Haitian tendency to say whatever it is they think is expected of them, it was obviously quite difficult for them to discuss this point with complete honesty. In spite of my meager expectations, there were some direct and honest responses to my indirect question.

After having been away from Haiti for nearly five years, I was curious about how it would feel to return in 2006. I was surprised at the ease with which I adjusted but kept in mind my limitations, in spite of having a basic understanding of the Haitian culture and a working knowledge of Creole. I had taught several lessons using Creole in order to encourage the teachers to use their mother tongue at school as well. The effect of my speaking Creole was that the teachers felt free to talk with me in Creole. During the interviews, there were times when my informants spoke so quickly that I could not understand all that they said. I asked them to repeat themselves but there were still details that I understood only after listening to the tapes repeatedly once back in Germany.

The dual role of both foreign-staff teacher and researcher had its disadvantages. During the teacher-training project, my focus was divided between teaching and research, which led to a shortage of time by the end of the seminar. The consequence was that Kettner and Lydie's interviews could not be verified. Another disadvantage also involved Lydie, who had come a few days late to the training project. When I explained to her that she was therefore not eligible to receive the certificate of completion but only a letter of participation, she was clearly disappointed. It was then that I experienced the cross-purposes of my roles. As a teacher and project representative, I had to enforce the rules but, as a researcher, I should have been in a more neutral position.

During the project, we practised team-teaching and so there were periods of simply sitting and observing what was going on in the classroom. In the beginning of the first week, my focus was on teaching and observation, and only toward the end of that week did I begin the interviews. During the second week, my focus had shifted. Although actively involved in class

every morning, I retreated a little from teaching and concentrated on more interviews and verifications. All things considered, the advantages of conducting my research while working with this project clearly outweighed the disadvantages. If time and funds had allowed, I would have liked to have extended my research by conducting the same type of interviews at other teacher-training projects in different parts of Haiti.

Yet another limitation--caused by my immersion into the Haitian scene--has been a less elaborate representation of the comparative international perspective.



## BLOOD

Let's go see blood flow,  
darling.

For once in a lifetime,  
it's not people's blood spilling,  
for once in the street  
it's not animal's blood flowing,

let's go see blood flow,  
darling:  
the sun is setting.<sup>125</sup>

### 4 A Nation of Artists of Survival

In this chapter, general information about Haiti's geopolitical, economic, demographic, and historical nature is presented. In spite of frequent periods of insecurity and political instability over the last two decades, the people of Haiti have demonstrated an amazing capacity to adapt to (or, when perceived as necessary, to resist) changing circumstances. While positive change in the lives of Haiti's people has occurred, the potential for much more remains to be achieved—Haiti is still the poorest country of the western hemisphere. The main sources for general data are the Human Development Report 2007/2008 (HDR 2007-2008)<sup>126</sup> and the entry for Haiti in The Europa World Year Book 2005.<sup>127</sup> The summary of Haitian history is taken from Bernecker<sup>128</sup>, Dubois<sup>129</sup>, Geggus<sup>130</sup>, and Heintz<sup>131</sup>. The explanations of Haitian spirituality are based upon the works of Cosentino<sup>132</sup>, Courlander<sup>133</sup>, Deren<sup>134</sup>, and Hurbon<sup>135</sup>. As an understanding

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<sup>125</sup> Castera, Georges. In Laraque & Hirschman, pp. 40-41

<sup>126</sup> UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world  
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>

<sup>127</sup> Including entries for "History" and "Economy" by Chamberlain

<sup>128</sup> Bernecker, Kleine Geschichte Haitis. 1996

<sup>129</sup> Dubois, Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution. 2004

<sup>130</sup> Geggus, Haitian Revolutionary Studies. 2002

<sup>131</sup> Heintz & Heintz, Written in Blood: the Story of the Haitian People 1492-1995. 2005

<sup>132</sup> Cosentino (Ed.), Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou. 1995

<sup>133</sup> Courlander, The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People. 1960

of Haitian spiritual thinking is essential to get an idea of the Haitian culture it is presented in detail. In the last section of this chapter, facts described in section 4.1 are illustrated through personal observations and perceptions of life in Haiti.

#### **4.1 Basic Data about Haiti**

##### **Land, Climate, and Population**

The Republic of Haiti occupies the western third of the Caribbean island Hispaniola, while the eastern two thirds belong to the Dominican Republic. Haiti is the most mountainous country in the Caribbean, and vast parts of it are not easily accessible. Transportation to and from many villages is extremely difficult and time consuming. Although only 30% of the land is considered arable, the growth in population has led to the cultivation of nearly 50% of the land--mostly in small plots. Erosion, drought and primitive farming methods have significantly reduced the fertility of the soil.

The Haitian climate is subtropical and there are two rainy seasons (April through May and September through October). The rainfall is unevenly distributed across the country, and most of it falls upon the northern plains, the mountains of the north-east, and the highlands of the south-western peninsula. The driest areas are found on the coastal strip that is located east of Port-au-Prince and on the north-western peninsula. The hurricane season, from June to October, sometimes brings severe storms and flooding. Temperatures at sea level vary between 20°C (68°F) and 35°C (95°F) and in higher areas, it is cooler.

In 2005, Haiti had a population of 9.3 million, of which 38.8% lived in urban areas.<sup>136</sup> Over time, the increasingly poor soil quality has severely reduced farming productivity. As a result, a continuous migration has occurred--from villages to towns, towns to the capital city of Port-au-Prince and, finally, from the capital to countries abroad. This migration from the countryside has brought rural character to many parts of Port-au-Prince. Since 1970, the population of the capital has tripled, and two thirds of its nearly two million inhabitants live in slums.<sup>137</sup> An estimated two million Haitians live abroad--800,000 to 1,000,000 in the USA, 600,000 in the

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<sup>134</sup> Deren, *Divine Horse-Men: The Voodoo Gods of Haiti*. 1970 (1953)

<sup>135</sup> Hurbon, *Voodoo: Search for the Spirit*. 1995

<sup>136</sup> A footnote in the HDR 2007-2008, p.246 reads as follows: "Because data are based on national definitions of what constitutes a city or metropolitan area, cross-country comparisons should be made with caution." I have specified the Haitian definition in chapter 3.1.

<sup>137</sup> A historical profile of Port-au-Prince and other Haitian cities can be found in Tata & Tata (1994).

Dominican Republic, 52,000 in Canada, and the remainder in other Caribbean countries, South America, and Europe.<sup>138</sup>

Haiti is a young country--38% of its inhabitants are under 15 years of age. Of the total population, 95% is of African descent, and 5% are of mixed heritage (African and European). The two official religions are Roman Catholicism and Vodou. According to different sources, between 66% and 90% of the population is Catholic, and between 10% and 20% attend the growing number of Protestant churches. Since Vodou is not organized on a national level, the percentage of Vodouists is unknown; however, many adherents do not see a contradiction in being both Catholic and Vodouist simultaneously.

The national languages are French and Haitian Creole. Creole is a tongue that shares many words with French; other Creole words have African, Amerindian, Spanish or English roots. Unlike French however, Creole verb forms are generally invariable, and verb markers indicate tense, aspect and mood. The context has an important influence on how things are expressed. For instance, the frequently mentioned phrase "*si Bondye vle*" "God willing" is often used as an indicator of future tense. However, this expression does not simply indicate the future tense--it also conveys the speaker's relationship with a future that is in the hands of God.

Haitian Creole is full of metaphors and proverbs, and a good Haitian joke can only be told in Creole. In a linguistic study of the function of the various French-Creole languages in the Caribbean, Fleischmann<sup>139</sup> described these languages as extremely demanding, full of hidden associations and ambiguities. A person not accustomed to a Creole language from birth could probably never master it.<sup>140</sup>

After Haitian independence from France, the elite continued to use French in formal situations and as the official language. Schooling and social advancement were only possible within the context of the French language. The constitution of 1987 recognized Creole as an official language in addition to French, and both were included in the primary school curriculum. As the students approached secondary and tertiary education, however, proficiency in French remained an important criterion for educational and social screening.

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<sup>138</sup> Orozco, "Understanding the remittance economy in Haiti." World Bank, 2006, p. 4

<sup>139</sup> Fleischmann, *Das Französisch-Kreolische in der Karibik: Zur Funktion von Sprache im sozialen und geographischen Raum*. 1986.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 87

According to the Ministry of Education,<sup>141</sup> the net enrolment ratio in primary schooling increased from 36.4% in 1990 to approximately 70% in 2003; however, only 18.4% of one cohort continued their education by enrolling in secondary school.<sup>142</sup> Access for girls and boys is almost balanced in primary school, yet there are slight gender disparities in favor of boys in the lower secondary grades which increase in the higher grades. Literacy among young people from 15 to 25 years of age is quoted to be 66.2% in the HDR 2005<sup>143</sup>. The UNICEF publication "Child Alert Haiti" (2006)<sup>144</sup> indicates that 10% of the children are engaged in domestic service away from their families--usually in a city--some even in the Dominican Republic. Customarily, families are visited by prospective employers or intermediaries and, in exchange for sending their child into the world of domestic work, receive monetary compensation as well as the promise of proper care and schooling for their child. In most cases, these *restavèk* (literally "to stay with") are exploited, abused and rarely have the chance to go to school.<sup>145</sup> Boys, in particular, have a tendency to run away from these abusive situations. It is estimated that 20,000 children live and work on the streets of Port-au-Prince.<sup>146</sup>

In the HDR 2007-2008, Haiti is ranked 146<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries in the Human Development Index.<sup>147</sup> In 2005, the life expectancy at birth was 59.5 years, and the mortality rate of children under 5 was 120 per 1,000

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<sup>141</sup> *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports (MENJS). Le développement de l'éducation: Rapport national d'Haïti* [The Development of Education: National Report of Haiti]. 2004.

<sup>142</sup> The HDRs of 2007-2008 and 2005 did not give figures for net primary enrolment, but for 1990 they assessed the rate at 22%.

<sup>143</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005: International cooperation at a crossroads: Aid, trade and security in an unequal world*. (An estimate produced by UNESCO Institute for Statistics in July 2002 is mentioned as source for this youth literacy rate, pp. 260-261) [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr05\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr05_complete.pdf)

<sup>144</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/childalert/haiti>

<sup>145</sup> See examples and explanations in 1.1, 5.1, and 10.1.2. For an autobiography, see: Cadet, *RESTAVEC: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American*. (1998)

<sup>146</sup> A detailed ethnographic research about the harsh lives of these children has been done by Kovats-Bernat. He described their cruel fight for survival on the streets of Port-au-Prince--including violent power struggles among each other--as well as their touching friendships and strong networks of support: *Sleeping Rough in Port-au-Prince: An Ethnography of Street Children and Violence in Haiti*. 2006

<sup>147</sup> This index measures the average achievements in a country using three basic criteria: a long and healthy life (life expectancy at birth), knowledge (adult literacy and gross enrolment ratio), and a decent standard of living (GDP per capita in US\$ calculated with regard to the purchasing power parity in the US) . HDR 2007-2008, p. 355

live births<sup>148</sup>. One positive development is that the percentage of the population aged 15-49 years and listed as HIV/AIDS infected, fell from 5.6% in 2003 to 3.8% in 2005. Still, an estimated 5,000 babies are born each year with the virus. The medical care necessary to adequately treat the number of HIV/AIDS cases has not been provided, as the report also indicates an average of one physician per 4,000 people.<sup>149</sup> This statistic does not represent the fact that the physician per person average improves dramatically in the cities and significantly worsens in the countryside. However, the cost of proper medical care is prohibitive for most people in both rural and urban areas; young children, in particular, suffer from this deplorable state of affairs.

In Haiti, only 54% of children under the age of one year receive vaccinations for measles, as compared to over 90% in Latin America, and 66% in Africa south of the Sahara. The total fertility rate is 4.0 children per woman, yet, in the countryside, it is not unusual to find women who have given birth to 8-12 children. Only 24% of the mothers are attended by skilled health personnel when they give birth,<sup>150</sup> and between 520 and 670<sup>151</sup> out of 100,000 mothers die at birth. Of the total Haitian population, 46% are undernourished, and 17% of the children under five years old are underweight for their age.

## Economy and Infrastructure

In 2005, per capita GDP was US\$ 500, which had purchasing power parity in the US of US\$ 1,663. According to World Bank calculations, however, the actual distribution of income reveals a marked inequity in which the poorest 20% of the population earned a share of 2.4% of the total household income, and the richest 20% earned a share of 63.4% (survey of 2001). 53.9% of the population earn less than \$1 a day and 78% earn less than \$2 a day.

Nearly two thirds of Haiti's working population are engaged in farming and fishing (most in farming); but less than a third of the country's GDP is produced by this sector, and less than 50% of the domestic food requirements are produced from within the country. The main food crops are: sugar, corn, rice, bananas, avocados, sorghum, vegetables, and citrus

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<sup>148</sup> When differentiated by income of the mothers, the poorest 20% have a mortality rate for children under 5 of 125 per 1,000 live births and the richest 20% have a rate of 55 per 1,000.

<sup>149</sup> In the same report the entry for neighboring Cuba is one physician per 169.2 people; for the US it is one physician per 390.6 people.

<sup>150</sup> When differentiated by income, 6% of the poorest 20% of the mothers are attended by skilled health personnel as opposed to 68% of the richest 20%.

<sup>151</sup> The first figure is from a report by the national authorities and the second is an adjustment based on reviews by UNICEF, WHO, and UNPF.

fruits. Lowered tariffs (by IMF-imposed reforms) led to increased importation of cheap foreign rice which devastated the market for local rice. Between 1990 and 2005, the importation of goods and services more than doubled (from 20% to 46% of GDP), while exports fell (from 18% to 16% of GDP). These developments necessitated increased help from outside. In 2005 Haiti received US\$ 515 million in official development assistance.

Additionally, an increasing source of income for Haitian families has materialized in the form of remittances from family members who have migrated abroad. The Haitian Diaspora, totalling almost two million, reside primarily in the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic. Their monetary contributions have grown from US\$ 108 million in 1995, to more than US\$ 930 million in 2004. This constitutes a rise of the remittances' percentage of Haiti's GDP from below 5% in 1995 to nearly 30% in 2004. Almost half of these funds were directed to rural Haiti, and nearly 40% went to the capital. The average remittance received by one household<sup>152</sup> in Haiti is US\$ 150 per month.

When asked for what purpose the money had been used, food was mentioned most (80.9%), then education (74%), clothes (64%), savings (34.2%), healthcare (27.9%), and then housing (26.8%). These remittances have a poverty-reducing effect and are an important lifeline since 55% of the recipients have no other income. Moreover, these trans-national ties boost the travel, tourist, telecommunication, and trade industries as evidenced by the fact that 55% of the remittance senders visit Haiti at least once a year, 13% visit twice a year and 6% visit three times a year. During their stay in Haiti, the majority (61%) reported spending up to US\$1,000, and another 25% was said to spend between US\$ 3,000 and US\$ 5,000.<sup>153 154</sup>

The result of a long history of selfish and corrupt governments is a deep-seated mistrust of government; such is Haiti's legacy. Unsurprisingly, the people are reluctant to rely upon the government, the police, or the reign of law. As a result, conflicts tend to be resolved extra judicially, even leading to vigilante acts of lynch law. A job with a government agency is seen by many Haitians as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to "cash in." Without the incentive of "extra cash," many public services are extremely inefficient. In 2004, Transparency International listed Haiti as the most

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<sup>152</sup> In Orozco there is a reference to a 2001 Population Census in which 21% of the households were identified as remittance recipients (p. 6).

<sup>153</sup> Data in this and the previous paragraph are taken from Orozco pp. 5,8,17 and 23.

<sup>154</sup> Another source of information regarding the Haitian diaspora in the U.S. is the report of The Trinity College Haiti Program (2002).

corrupt<sup>155</sup> country in the world (out of 145 countries); in 2005, it was listed as the 5<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country (out of 158 countries); in 2006, it was listed again as the most corrupt country (out of 163 countries); and, in 2007 it was listed as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most corrupt country (out of 180 countries—the position of that year's most corrupt country was shared by Myanmar and Somalia).<sup>156</sup>

The charcoal from local timber supplies more than two thirds of the energy needs in Haiti which has led to dramatic deforestation. Once covered with forests, today only 3.8% of the Haitian total land area is wooded. Most of the available electricity is generated at the Péligre hydroelectric plant, north of Port-au-Prince. In spite of its proximity, the production is inadequate even in the capital, and not enough current is available for all households; different regions of the city are alternately supplied at different times of the day. The state-owned electrical company, EDH, is unable to control the distribution of its electricity or the collection of payments for its services. Out of necessity, electricity pirates have connected their cables to the power lines of adjacent regions in order to profit from the different supply schedules. It is said that more than half of the current used is stolen or illegally resold. Because of the insecure political situation, the capital's electricity supply gradually decreased over the last decade but, since 2005, has begun to reappear. Other major cities receive even less electricity than the capital, and most of the small towns and villages have no public electricity supply at all, altogether 5.5 million Haitians have no electricity.

The water distribution system is even less developed. A public system of pipes supplying the households directly and continuously is non-existent. The upper and middle classes have water reservoirs in their yards from which water is pumped into a container on the roof and then used in the house. The reservoir can be filled with water from a delivery truck or with water from public pipes that comes once a day—at most. The water delivered by truck is paid for when the order is filled, and a monthly fee is charged for the water delivered by the public pipes. Both are luxuries that most people cannot afford. Only 54% of the population has reasonable access<sup>157</sup> to an improved water source.<sup>158</sup> Yet, even to walk one kilometer

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<sup>155</sup> Transparency International defines corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score measures the degree of corruption as perceived by business people and country analysts.

[www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

<sup>156</sup> Transparency International, [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

<sup>157</sup> "Reasonable access is defined as the availability of at least 20 litres per person per day from a source within one kilometre of the user's dwelling." (HDR 2007-2008, p. 371)

<sup>158</sup> An "improved water source" is defined as one of the following methods by which drinking water is supplied: "household connections, public standpipes,

to fetch water consumes much time and energy and so is often done by children. In many cases, this job prevents the children from attending school. Those without reasonable access to an improved water source typically live in the countryside where the acquisition of water is even more difficult; potable sources are often located a few kilometers away from villages and can only be reached by way of mountainous paths.

With such limited access to water, the sanitary facilities are greatly inadequate. Only 30% of the population has access to adequate sanitation.<sup>159</sup> Water closets are a luxury and even latrines are not standard. In poor metropolitan areas especially, the fields of human waste cause many diseases. During the rainy season, torrential rainfalls cleanse these fields.

## **4.2 Haitian History**

### **Amerindians, Europeans and Africans**

When Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Ayiti ("Land of Mountains" in the native Amerindian language), he claimed it for the Spanish crown, and, as it reminded him of Spain, he changed its name to Hispaniola. The island was then populated by an Amerindian tribe called Taino (Arawaks) that had established five kingdoms on the island. Their society was highly stratified; there were kings, aristocrats, common people and serfs (slaves). The population is estimated to have been between 200,000 and 1,000,000<sup>160</sup> and some sources even mention up to 8 million.<sup>161</sup>

Columbus noted his first impressions of these people in his logbook, stating:

Your Highness may believe that these lands are of such extent, good and fertile, and especially those of this island of Espaniola, that no one knows how to describe them and no one can believe it, unless he has seen it. And you may believe that this island and all the others are as much your own as Castile, so that there is lacking here nothing except a settlement and then to command them to do what you wish.

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boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs and rainwater collection." (HDR 2007-2008, p. 371)

<sup>159</sup> "Adequate sanitation" includes the following excreta disposal facilities, "a connection to a sewer or septic tank system, a pour-flush latrine, a simple pit latrine, or a ventilated improved pit latrine," all of which are "private or shared (but not public)" and "can effectively prevent human, animal and insect contact with excreta." (HDR 2007-2008, p. 370)

<sup>160</sup> Bernecker, p. 12

<sup>161</sup> Bolay, Hispaniola: 500 Jahre danach. Die Indianer Quisqueyas: Haiti - Dominikanische Republik. 1994, p. 167



He continued:

They have no arms and are all naked and without any knowledge of war, and very cowardly, so that a thousand of them would not face three. And they are also fitted to be ruled and to be set to work, to cultivate the land and to do all else that may be necessary, and you may build towns and teach them to go clothed and adopt our customs.<sup>162</sup>

This portrayal, however, was misguided. When the Tainos refused to work for the Spaniards, they were brutally forced to do so. In addition, many of them were infected with European diseases and, unable to resist the foreign micro-organisms, they died in large numbers. Others were killed in conflicts with the Spanish rulers or committed suicide out of despair. As a result of the inhuman enslavement the Tainos were reduced to only a few thousand some 50 years after Columbus had conquered the island. Today, no Tainos can be found in Haiti, and only rarely will a Haitian with Indian ancestry be found.

Beginning in 1519, slaves were imported from the Portuguese territory of Africa. The first sugarcane plantations in the New World were established on the coastal plain of Santo Domingo. In 1520, sugar began to be exported to Spain, however the Spanish colony was not overly productive, the method of transport was not yet well established, and most of the sugar imported to Europe came from Brasil. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, French adventurers settled in the western part of the island. Ensuing conflicts between the Spanish and the French were settled in the peace treaty of Rijswijk in 1697, according to which Spain had to cede the western part of the island to France. However, that border was further west than it is today (it was altered several times and most recently revised in 1936). The French part of the island was called Saint-Domingue. An increasing number of French planters settled in the country and established plantations.

Saint-Domingue's economic development was built upon slave imports and sugar and coffee exports. By the year 1770, 800,000 slaves had been imported. Their working conditions were so harsh that their average life expectancy, after arriving on the island, was only seven to ten years. Based upon this inhumane exploitation, Saint-Domingue became the most profitable colony in the world. France used most of the goods imported from Saint-Domingue for trade with other European countries. By 1789, the crops from approximately 8,000 plantations generated about two fifths of France's overseas trade. In that year, the colony exported 64,000 tons of sugar and 35,000 tons of coffee, which comprised 60% of the western world's coffee consumption.

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<sup>162</sup> The Journal of Christopher Columbus. 1968, pp. 101-102

## Rebellion and Independence

Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century approximately 40,000 whites lived in Saint-Domingue, around 500,000 slaves and, constituting a middle class, 30,000 free people of color--the *gens de couleur*. The white community was united by racial solidarity but divided along class lines. The free non-white population was unusual in its size and wealth; some were rich and cultivated planters who had been educated in France. Yet, anyone with black ancestry was subject to legally-sanctioned discrimination; *gens de couleur* had no access to public office and certain other professions, and they were restricted to segregated seating in churches, theaters and restaurants. While these regulations were not strictly enforced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought stringent application. Nevertheless, many free colored people were landowners (who owned slaves) and tradesmen. They were also the backbone of the colonial militia--the *maréchaussée*, dominated the rural police and, among other things, hunted fugitive slaves. As they owned smaller plots of land in the mountains they profited from the coffee boom and increased their wealth. The majority of the colored people, however, were artisans or smallholders, and the women were often petty traders or the mistresses of white men.

The slave population of Saint-Domingue was the largest in the Caribbean and growing. Between 1785 and 1790, an average of 30,000 slaves were imported from Africa every year. This part of the population was even more diverse than the whites or the people of color. They came from many different African cultures, spoke many different languages and varied in the degree to which they assimilated into colonial society. Those who were born and raised in slavery--the Creoles--were considered to be the slave upper class. They worked as domestics, artisans and slave drivers. They spoke Creole and some French. They were superficially Christianized, and a few could read and write. They were accustomed to producing their own food and were free to sell any excess crops.

Before 1790, violent resistance in Saint-Domingue was rare, and opposition was instead channelled into *marronage*.<sup>163</sup> Bands of fugitive slaves formed in the mountains and forests. Some of these maroons attacked travellers and isolated plantations. The rural police would hunt them, but they were not perceived as a threat to the system.

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<sup>163</sup> In *Les marrons du syllabaire: Quelques aspects du problème de l'instruction et de l'éducation des esclaves et affranchis de Saint-Domingue* (1988a) Fouchard traced the origin to the Spanish word *cimarron* ("wild"). This Spanish word has its origin with the Indian tribe of Panama, the *Symarons*, who revolted against the Spaniards. (p. 9)

A group of French planters that had long favored the idea of self-government felt strengthened when the North American colonists became independent from England. Some free colored people had an even closer experience with American liberation. They were sent to the state of Georgia to join the fight for independence. They returned to Saint-Domingue with military experience and a new pride.

The abolition movement in the northern United States, the activities of the French antislavery society, *Amis des Noirs*, and news of the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity did not go unnoticed in Saint-Domingue. The fall of the Bastille and the creation of a National Assembly in Paris, in 1789, brought complete change to Saint-Domingue as well. From among white planters, different assemblies formed, each representing a particular position on the issue of Saint-Domingue's autonomy and on the preconditions for voting. The great majority of whites agreed on two things: Slavery had to continue, and white supremacy should be maintained. The free colored people in Saint-Domingue, however, demanded equal rights with whites, and the *Société des Amis des Noirs* in France campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and for equal rights for free people of color.

The starting point of the Haitian revolution is generally said to have occurred during a Vodou ceremony at Boi Caïman in the north of Haiti. Led by Boukman Dutty, it was here that he and participating maroons prepared for revolt (see 4.3). Eventually, these rebels united with French Republican officials who wanted to prevent the colonial French planters from seceding from France and who offered the rebels freedom in return for military support. A key figure in the negotiations between the French interests and the interests of the revolting slaves was Toussaint l'Ouverture. He had been a member of the slave elite on an estate near Cap Français (today Cap Haïtien), before he was freed at the age of 30 and joined the class of free colored slave holders.

In 1793 and 1794, Toussaint changed sides and allied himself with the Spanish troops who were defending Santo Domingo against France and strengthened his troops by winning a series of victories against the French and free people of color. In 1794, he suddenly sided with revolutionary France against the Spanish and British who had allied themselves with the slave owners in the south. Several years of continuous warfare ensued. Toussaint's troops suffered hardships but ultimately gained strength and experience. In 1796, France appointed Toussaint as deputy governor of Saint-Domingue and, in 1797, as commander-in-chief. Pressured by Toussaint's army of 20,000 in the north and André Rigaud's army of 10,000 in the south, the British troops gradually retreated.

An ensuing confrontation between the northern and southern troops, in which the mulattos of both troops sided with Rigaud, ended with Toussaint's victory and the mulattos' flight to France. By mid-1800, France, whose revolutionary government had been overthrown by Napoleon in 1799, recognized Toussaint as governor, and he began rebuilding the colony. He was committed to the liberty of the former

slaves, yet he also wanted to revive the plantation system in order to restore the country's prosperity. In 1801, he set up a constitution in which he made himself governor for life. Secretly, he arranged commercial treaties and a non-aggression pact with Britain and the US. When Toussaint annexed the adjoining colony of Santo Domingo, Napoleon decided to send his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, to invade the island in order to restore French rule in Saint-Domingue. A war of independence began. As the French troops gained ground, several of Toussaint's generals surrendered and turned against those who continued to resist. Toussaint was deported to France where he died in prison in April 1803.

In mid-1802, when it became known in Saint-Domingue that Napoleon wanted to restore slavery in all French colonies, the French troops encountered massive resistance. The colored and black generals deserted the French troops and united under the leadership of Jean Jacques Dessalines to fight the French. As many French soldiers lay defeated and dying from disease, reinforcements were prevented from crossing the Atlantic by the British navy. By November 1803, the remaining French troops were evacuated.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines declared the independence of Saint-Domingue. The original Amerindian name of Haïti was adopted for the new republic, and Dessalines became its first head of state. "In a world dominated by Europeans and where slavery and the slave trade were at their height, the new state was a symbol of black freedom and a demonstration of black accomplishments."<sup>164</sup> This was, of course, perceived as a threat by those nations that continued to base their economy on slavery. As a consequence the young republic was isolated.<sup>165</sup>

## 200 Years of Instability

When Dessalines learned of Napoleon's plans for a coronation ceremony, he made plans for his own coronation. In October 1804, he was crowned emperor Jacques I. His plan to build the country's economy by obliging the rural population to work in the fields was very unpopular among the newly freed slaves, and his authoritarian style offended the mulatto elite. A revolt began in the south of Haiti and, in October 1806, Dessalines was killed. The rebels chose the black general, Henri Christophe, as provisory head of state. The mulatto elite insisted on a constitution to prevent further misuse of power. One of their generals, Alexandre Pétion, drafted the constitution by following the American constitution. The right to vote was associated with income and property ownership (this was not changed until 1950!).

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<sup>164</sup> Geggus, p. 27

<sup>165</sup> Regarding Haitian-American relations after Haiti's independence see, Douglass ("Lecture on Haiti, 1893), Du Bois (1994/1903, pp. 38, 41), Matthewson (2003), and Pamphile (2001).

Christophe was not willing to accept the limited power of a republican president and, after a failed attempt to seize power in the south, he retreated to the north where he established his kingdom as King Henri I. The senate elected Pétion as president of the south.

At this point, the southern senate ratified a tax law with grave consequences--export duty was to become the main source of income for the state. This indirect taxation became Haiti's financial base during the entire century. The trading companies were responsible for paying this duty on all exported goods. Subsequent changes in the agricultural sector were designed so that, without their knowledge or consent, it was the Haitian farmers who produced the crops for exportation that financed the state. The mulatto elite concentrated their financial interests in the cities, and the gap between rural and urban Haiti was solidified.

Pétion did not continue the plantation economy but, instead, distributed the land. Lundahl<sup>166</sup> explained,

The year 1809 is arguably the most decisive year in the economic history of Haiti – even more so than the year of political independence. ... Between that year and 1818 more than 100,000 hectares of state land were redistributed, either through grants to army officers and soldiers or through outright sales. It is estimated that about 10,000 people benefited directly from this reform, but its real importance rather lay in the fact that it set a much larger, avalanche-like, informal movement in motion. The ex-slaves simply took over the land in whatever way they could. The country became a peasant nation where land would eventually be much more evenly distributed than in the rest of Latin America.<sup>167</sup>

Christophe, In contrast, established a rigid system of forced labor in the fields which resulted in a prosperous economy; however, the population revolted against him and, in 1820, he killed himself. Northern and southern Haiti were then unified under Pétion's successor, Jean Pierre Boyer, who continued the distribution of land to the population.

The history of the young republic was marked by economic difficulties, dictatorial leaders, bloody rebellions and frequent changes of government. Lundahl remarked,

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<sup>166</sup> Lundahl, "The Economic Consequences of 1809, or 'Was Haiti Doomed to Fail?' A Story of Factor Proportions, Labor Market Institutions and Politics." In Behar, Jonsson & Lundahl. Currents of Change: Globalization, Democratization and Institutional Reform in Latin America. 2002. pp. 321-353

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 335

Whoever managed to capture the presidency could tax the population, more or less legally and more or less efficiently, and put the proceeds into his own pockets, and that is precisely what the Haitian rulers would henceforth do. The state degenerated into a predatory state ruled by a kleptocracy, and Haitian political history turned into a mere fight over the spoils of the presidential office – a situation that unfortunately has persisted into the present.<sup>168</sup>

Almost every Haitian government was overturned by a revolt during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and reforms that one head of state initiated were destroyed by the next. The ideals contained in the constitution and the political reality were in stark contrast. Tensions between blacks and the ruling mulattos produced constant instability. In addition, France demanded enormous indemnity payments in return for the recognition of Haiti's independence.

In 1860, president Geffrard signed a concordat with Pope Pius IX to ally the Haitian Catholic church with Rome. In this document, Roman Catholic authority over the Haitian Catholic Church was established, and the Roman Catholic Church accepted the task of establishing a centralized education system in Haiti, which served mainly the children of the elite. The Haitian State agreed to financially support the immigration of foreign clergy hoping that this contract would help the country to gain more international recognition.

After several presidents were overthrown in rapid succession at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the US invaded Haiti to "restore order" in 1915. The US supported the mulatto elite and attempted to stabilize the country's economy. They made efforts to improve the health and sanitation system, built bridges and streets, and introduced a telephone system in several towns. However, the Haitian population resented the authoritarian and insensitive manners<sup>169</sup> of the occupants and many reforms were rejected later. After the Americans retreated in 1934, conflicts between the blacks and the mulattos intensified<sup>170</sup> and an emerging black bourgeoisie pushed its way into power. In spite of the disaccord, the international intellectual and cultural movement of black self-confidence, *negritude*, had

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<sup>168</sup> Lundahl (2002), p. 337

<sup>169</sup> See explanations in 4.3 about expropriation of peasants and forced labor on the roads.

<sup>170</sup> Haiti's mulatto president Stenio Vincent did almost nothing in reaction to one of the most horrible crimes against Haitians--the 1937 massacre of Haitian cane cutters who had settled in the Dominican Republic. In an attempt to "de-africanize the borders" (*desafricanizar las fronteras*) the troops of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo had massacred close to 20,000 Haitians. After he had paid a ridiculously low indemnity to the Haitian government, Trujillo continued his office until he was assassinated in 1961.

advocates among mulatto and black Haitians equally. Affirmation of African ancestry and a new sense of national identity found expression in the Haitian movement, *Les Griots*.<sup>171</sup> Black doctors, lawyers and teachers were representatives of this group, and, among them, the future Haitian dictator, François Duvalier.

In 1946, Elie Lescot was overthrown, and his black successor, Dumarsais Estimé, was able to cut Haiti's dependence on US control over its finances. He initiated the first income tax in Haitian history. Haiti also became the first country for which the UN designed developmental programs. In 1957, the Black Nationalist doctor, François Duvalier, ("Papa Doc") was elected president. He intended to end the mulattos' political power and introduced ways for more blacks to enter the government. To counterbalance the mulatto-controlled army, he created the *Tontons Macoutes*<sup>172</sup>, a black militia force that he positioned across the entire country. To supplement their income, the soldiers arbitrarily extorted money. The population feared and hated them.

Duvalier, seeking to limit the influence of the Catholic Church, appointed the first Haitian head of the local Roman Catholic Church. Opposition was curbed and Duvalier's rule soon degenerated into violence. When he expelled the US ambassador in 1963, the US suspended aid to Haiti. In 1964, he declared himself to be "President-for-Life." Many of his opponents, especially members of the mulatto elite, left the country. This is how Lundahl<sup>173</sup> characterized Duvalier's dictatorship:

He was an innovator in the predatory state and by destroying all potential alternative power bases – i.e. by going much further than any Haitian ruler before him in political ruthlessness – he, and his son, were

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<sup>171</sup> *Griot* is an African word for a story-teller or magician.

<sup>172</sup> The entry "*Tontons Macoutes*" in the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures* (2000) by Dash reads as follows: "The Tontons Macoutes were a civilian militia created by François **Duvalier** in 1958 to put down opposition and recruit support throughout Haiti. Officially called the Volunteers for National Security, they got their more popular name from a figure in Haitian folklore who took away wicked children in a sack. They served as an information network for Duvalier, and even though their exact size was never known, their reputation for terrorizing the population was well earned. The ubiquitous macoutes ensured the survival of François Duvalier, but his son who succeeded him alienated their support. With his overthrow in 1986, the macoutes became the targets for mob attacks and 'necklacing' with burning tires." Balderston, Gonzalez, & López (Eds.), p. 1475

<sup>173</sup> Lundahl, *Themes in Development Economics: Essays on Method, Peasants and Government*. (1995)

also much more successful than their predecessors when it came to milking the resources of the country for personal gain.<sup>174</sup>

Toward the end of his life, he arranged for his son, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") to inherit his position of "President-for-Life." When Dr. Duvalier died in 1971, his son, who was only 19 years old, became president. At first, he continued his father's separatist course, but later he developed a different emphasis. His goal was to integrate Haiti into the world market. The US resumed economic and military aid. Taking advantage of the East-West polarisation during that time, Jean-Claude Duvalier contrived to appear in need of support and, at the same time, to have a pro-West philosophy. It was no secret that his regime would skim aid money, but for political reasons, it was tolerated. Nevertheless, he did not do much to improve the misery of the Haitian people.

He also did nothing to prevent the US-Canadian funded "Program for the Eradication of Porcine Swine Fever and the Development of Pig Raising"<sup>175</sup> in the early 1980's. This program destroyed 1.2 million Creole pigs--the backbone of Haiti's peasant economy--and a viable alternative was never provided.<sup>176</sup> Repeated famines and the flight of thousands of boat people from Haiti alarmed the world. Inside the country, opposition grew stronger and, in 1984 and 1985, culminated in revolt. In February 1986, the Duvaliers were forced to flee into French exile. They had channelled their financial reserves into Swiss bank accounts long before.

A civilian-military junta assumed power and promised democracy. However, as there was no official effort to establish control or to hold accountable the former *Tonton Macoutes*, angry mobs killed hundreds of known *macoutes*, sparing only the lives of top officials. In 1987, a new constitution was ratified in which leading Duvalierists were banned from political functions for a period of ten years. Other provisions in this constitution were the official recognition of Creole as a national language and the introduction of the political office of prime minister, to be nominated by the president but approved by parliament. Several subsequent attempts to hold democratic elections were alternated with military coups.

In November 1990, a democratic election took place under the first female president of the country, the courageous Ertha Pascal Trouillot (a Supreme

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<sup>174</sup> Lundahl (1995), p. 327

<sup>175</sup> In *When the Hands Are Many* (2001), Smith referred to this event as the "Haitian peasant's Great Stock Market Crash." (p.29)

<sup>176</sup> King, *Räumliche Mobilität in Haiti zwischen Paysannerie und Weltmarkt: Wandel der Beziehungen zwischen Land, Stadt und Ausland unter dem Einfluss der Globalisierung am Beispiel des Verflechtungsraums von Cap Haïtien*. 2005 pp. 68-69



Court president, appointed provisionally for the sole purpose of ensuring democratic elections). Jean Bertrand Aristide, a former Catholic priest who had been part of the opposition movement of the *Ti Legliz* ("little church"),<sup>177</sup> won the election with a 67% majority.

Before Aristide's term began, Duvalier's former minister of the interior, Roger Lafontant, took outgoing President Pascal Trouillot hostage in an attempt to seize power. When forced to appear on TV, in order to publicly hand over the presidency to Lafontant, Trouillot successfully thwarted her captor's plans by informing the public that she was a hostage. After violent street protests, she was freed with the help of the army, and order was restored.<sup>178</sup>

In February 1991, Aristide assumed the presidency. Under his government, corruption and political violence were reduced, and his advocacy of social justice alarmed the old elite. However, he lacked both administrative experience and the ability to deal diplomatically with parliament. His attempt to reduce the military budget sparked much opposition. In September 1991, Aristide was overthrown by the army. He was arrested, but allowed to leave the country. Hundreds of his supporters were killed. Economic sanctions and suspension of foreign aid were imposed upon Haiti by the Organisation of American States and later, by the UN. The military regime continued to refuse to reinstall Aristide. Thousands more of his supporters were killed during the embargo.

The subsequent exodus of boat people to the United States became a great concern of the US government. In 1994, Clinton declared full support for Aristide's return (under pressure from African-American US politicians). When the Haitian regime expelled UN observers in July 1994, the UN authorized an invasion to depose the military regime. The United States sent 21,000 US troops which, in addition to groups of several hundred from other countries, began landing in September. The regime leaders' departure was negotiated and, on October 15, Aristide returned to Haiti to resume office. Only one year of his term remained.

In March 1995, a 7,000 strong UN peacekeeping force replaced the US soldiers. It was gradually reduced until, in November 1997, the last of the 1,200 foreign troops left the country. In the meantime, Aristide had named a businessman, Smarck Michel, as Prime Minister. Michel pledged to modernize the country. He also wanted to privatize state bodies and reduce the number of government employees, in accordance with conditions for foreign assistance. When Aristide did not concur with this

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<sup>177</sup> This grass roots movement opposing Jean-Claude Duvalier had been initiated by Catholic priests who were inspired by liberation theology. It was one of the primary driving forces behind the revolt against Duvalier.

<sup>178</sup> This is how she told the story during a private meeting in May 1999.

strategy, Michel resigned. At the election in November 1995, the representative of Aristide's *Organisation Politique Lavalas* (OPL),<sup>179</sup> Rene Preval, won the election with 87% of the votes. This was the first time in the history of Haiti, that an elected president was followed by another elected president.

Preval named Rosny Smarth as Prime Minister. Although Smarth proposed a smaller austerity program, the reforms that he suggested were not accepted by the parliament. Demonstrations, strikes and increasing violence lead to Smarth's resignation. After the parliament refused to accept any more of Preval's nominees for Prime Minister, he announced that he would no longer recognize the legislature and appointed Jacques Edouard Alexis as Prime Minister.

By this time, Aristide had begun to accuse Preval of having lost contact with the party's grass roots supporters and founded a new party, *Fanmi Lavalas* (FL)<sup>180</sup> in contrast to Preval's OPL. Legislative and municipal elections in May 2000 strengthened the seats of FL in the Chamber of Deputies as well as in the Senate. Nevertheless, the US, Europe and other international organizations denounced the results as fraudulent and maintained their aid suspension.

In November 2000, Aristide won the election with 92% of the votes cast. Estimates of the voter turnout ranged from 10% to over 60%. The opposition boycotted the vote and insisted that all elections held in 2000 be nullified and completely re-run. In February 2001, when Aristide was sworn in, the opposition declared a symbolic alternative government. Aristide announced that early legislative elections would be held to satisfy international criticism and restore foreign aid. Violence between government and opposition continued, however, and hostility toward the independent media grew. Increasingly, government supporters and opponents openly engaged in violent fights against each other.

On January 1, 2004, events celebrating 200 years of freedom were boycotted by many intellectuals and foreign leaders. The unrest intensified, demonstrations began, and the political opposition demanded Aristide's resignation as a precondition for any settlement. Beginning with Gonaives, numerous cities were seized by the rebels. Aristide asked for international help, but France and the US required that he first step down. On February 29<sup>th</sup>, with the help of the US,<sup>181</sup> he was flown out of the country to the Central African Republic and later to South Africa. With the approval of the UN Security Council, US and French troops landed in Haiti hours after

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<sup>179</sup> Political Organisation of Torrential Cleansing

<sup>180</sup> Family of Torrential Cleansing

<sup>181</sup> Aristide later claimed that he was taken out of the country by force, which the US denied.

Aristide's departure. This Multinational Interim Force was replaced in June 2004 by a UN peacekeeping force led by Brazil.<sup>182</sup>

A council of "elders" chose retired UN economist Gerard Latortue to serve as Prime Minister under a figurehead President, Boniface Alexandre (President of the Supreme Court). The interim government, in cooperation with the UN peacekeeping force, announced legislative and presidential elections for September and November 2005, both of which had to be postponed several times. The presidential elections were held in February 2006, and René Préval won with 51% of the votes, after a complicated counting and recounting process. Since then, in collaboration with UN forces still present in Haiti, Préval has focused his efforts on stabilizing the country. Beginning in 2007, substantial foreign aid projects were launched to improve the infrastructure of the capital and the desperate living conditions in Cité Soleil (Haiti's largest slum).

### 4.3 Haiti's Spirituality

#### Vodou, Catholicism and Protestantism

Regardless of denomination, religious practice plays an important role in the social and emotional life of Haitians. Religious services are usually well-attended and last for hours. Officially, Haiti has a Catholic majority and a growing number of adherents to various Protestant denominations. A small percentage of the population identifies itself as Vodouist even though, in reality, a much larger part is connected to Vodou beliefs or practices in some way. Although there are many who outwardly disassociate themselves from Vodou, it is said that nothing in Haiti has so many public enemies and so many secret friends.

After a long and futile history of persecuting Vodouists, the Catholic Church has somehow found a way to coexist with Vodou. In the constitution of 1987, both Roman Catholicism and Vodou are named as Haiti's official religions. Some of the Protestant Churches that spread throughout Haiti during the last century, however, condemn Vodou as inspired by evil forces and as the root of all Haiti's problems.

Blier<sup>183</sup> traced the term *vodun*, "which is translated generally as god, sacra, sacred, or priestly"<sup>184</sup>, back to the *Doctrina Christiana* which was written by a West African ambassador to the Spanish court in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In this work, she found evidence that its cultural origins lie in the language family of the *Ayizo* whose speakers live in the lower areas of

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<sup>182</sup> Examples for an analysis of these events are Dupuy (2007) and Nissen (2004), a literary processing of the theme can be found in Buch (2004).

<sup>183</sup> Blier, "Vodun: West African Roots of Vodou." In Cosentino, pp. 61-87

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 61

Benin (former Dahomey) and Togo, an area formerly called Guinea Coast or Slave Coast.

The initial enslavement, the experience of Middle Passage and the brutal work load forced upon plantation slaves created an irreparable schism with their past lives in Africa. Thus began the desperate process of adaptation to the harsh requirements of colonial economy. To survive in this new environment, the slaves sought spiritual refuge within the vestiges of their respective African religions. Since communal ceremonies were an essential part of all African religious practices, the reconstruction of Vodou had to be negotiated among adepts representing the religious beliefs of many different African tribes. To create unity, ritual figures had to emerge from their midst. This process was possible because of beliefs that were shared by the various African religions. In the introduction to Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou<sup>185</sup> Cosentino remarks:

However fabulous its recurring Caribbean reconstructions, the structure of Vodou art, liturgy and theology is derived from common elements of African religions. Belief in a pantheon of intermediary spirits who may be appeased through sacrifice and are manifested through spirit possession; music and dance as part of ceremony, sacred images and objects, the generational cycle of death and rebirth; the benign orchestration of a distant god. – These are the common denominators of West and Central African religious practice upon which Haitians painted a Creole face.<sup>186</sup>

At the same time, African Vodou changed as well: "Fon<sup>187</sup> and Haiti share an ancient and ongoing history of inducting foreign deities into their heavens."<sup>188</sup> Thus, Vodou is characterized by spontaneity, flexibility and openness, along with the complete absence of any written records. "It has never been codified in writing, never possessed a national institutional structure – a priesthood, a national church, an orthodoxy, a seminary, a hymnal, a hierarchy or a charter."<sup>189</sup> More immediate than in hierarchical religious systems, the development of Vodou is mediated and controlled by its adepts--those who serve the spirits.

Harold Courlander reflected upon what was kept and what was lost in the process of the West Africans' adaptation to Haiti:

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<sup>185</sup> Cosentino, "Introduction: Imagine Heaven." In Cosentino, pp. 25-55

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 29

<sup>187</sup> West African tribe

<sup>188</sup> Cosentino, p. 30

<sup>189</sup> Mintz & Trouillot, "The Social History of Haitian Vodou." In Cosentino, pp. 123-147 (quotation from p. 123)

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.<sup>190</sup>

Courlander concluded that this survival occurred because of the attitudes of the colonial masters and, in particular, of the Catholic Church toward African heritage--"tolerance-by-necessity"--as opposed to the Protestant reaction in the United States in which Africanisms were "stamped out with Puritan fervor."<sup>191</sup> The African spiritual heritage only remained in Louisiana, which was controlled by Catholic France.

In a conversation<sup>192</sup> with Donald Cosentino at the artist's compound in July 1986 André Pierre<sup>193</sup>, one of Haiti's senior Vodou priests and also one of its most famous artists, said:

The Vodou religion is before all other religions. It is more ancient than Christ. It is the first religion of the Earth. It is the creation of the World. The World is created by Vodou. The world is created by magic. The first magician is God who created people with his own hands from the dust of the Earth. People originated by magic in all countries of the world. No one lives of the flesh. Everyone lives of the spirit.<sup>194</sup>

*Vodou* centers on human interaction with spirits called *lwa*-s. They stand below the supreme deity, *Bondye* ("good God"), who is adored and respected but with whom direct contact is difficult. *Lwa*-s distinguish themselves from humans through their *konesans* or supernatural powers but, like humans, have their own tastes, habits and passions. These traits can be seen and felt when a *lwa* takes possession of a human being during a Vodou ceremony and interacts with the audience--talking to them, eating, dancing, giving a blessing or advice, or simply entertaining everyone. Typically, the persons ridden<sup>195</sup> by the *lwa* cannot remember what has been done or said through them. Alfred Métraux described these possessions as distinctly different from phenomena associated with mental illness. In contrast to those, Vodou possessions are controlled phenomena

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<sup>190</sup> Courlander, p. 5

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>192</sup> Documented in Cosentino, pp. xx-xxiii under the heading "A World Created by Magic: Extracts from a Conversation with André Pierre."

<sup>193</sup> He died in October 2005 at the age of 91 years.

<sup>194</sup> In Cosentino, p. xx

<sup>195</sup> The possessed person is considered the 'horse' of the *lwa*.

subject to clear rules ("*La possession est donc un phénomène contrôlé, obéissant à des règles précises*").<sup>196</sup>

Unaffected by the absence of a regional or national structural hierarchy, there is a spiritual hierarchy on a local level. Maya Deren recapitulates her subchapter on "The Levels of Hierarchy" as follows:

In sum, then, the hierarchy is a recognition of the degrees of understanding achieved with spiritual maturity, and an individual who has passed through all the ordeals and stages of elevation and has become *houngan*<sup>197</sup> has undergone a personal characterological development of considerable scope; he is consequently a distinguished figure in the community.<sup>198</sup>

Almost all the major *lwa*-s of Vodou are directly associated with various Roman Catholic saints. Although it has been proposed that this relationship was originally contrived only to conceal Vodou practice in colonial times, it is now understood that a genuine intermingling of the two religions has taken place. Most Vodou practitioners are also practising Roman Catholics and do not view the two religions as mutually exclusive.

*Lwa*-s are connected to a specific realm of nature (air, earth, water, and fire), human behavior, colors and ritual. The following are a few examples of *lwa*-s and their characteristics:

- *Dambala* is the principle of goodness. His symbols are the snake and the rainbow and, when he appears, he imitates a snake's movement. He has the power to bring wealth, luck, and happiness. His realm is water and he lives in springs and rivers. His color is white and he is offered all things white: hens, rice, milk, and eggs. His special day is Thursday. His Catholic counterpart is Saint Patrick, known for banishing the snakes from Ireland.
- *Ezili* is the *lwa* of beauty, grace, luxury and pleasure. Her symbols are heart and mirror and, when she appears, she comes with a seductive air and provocative behavior. She seeks perfumes and has the power to influence human love. Her realm is water and she lives on river banks. Her colors are blue and pink and she is offered toiletries, rare and refined dishes, rice, and chicken. Her special days are Tuesday and Thursday. Her Catholic counterpart is The Virgin Mary.
- *Gédé* is the *lwa* of the dead. His symbols are the cadaver, black cross and farm implements. When he appears, he uses obscene words and gestures and has a cadaverous appearance. He has the power to make or repel spells. His realm is the earth and he lives in cemeteries and

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<sup>196</sup> Métraux, *Haiti: La terre, les hommes et les dieux*. 1957, p. 89

<sup>197</sup> Also *oungan*--a priest in a religious family network

<sup>198</sup> Deren, p. 158

subterranean places. His colors are black, purple and white, and he is offered a black goat or a black rooster. His special days are Monday and Friday. His Catholic counterpart is Saint Expedit.<sup>199 200</sup>

These *lwa*-s have human traits, and none of them are exclusively good or evil. The factors that determine the good or evil nature of a *lwa* depend upon the way in which it is contacted and the purpose for which its help is required. *Lwa-s erite* ("inherited") perform good deeds, while *lwa-s achte* ("bought") perform malevolent ones. A person can serve the *lwa*-s "with the right hand," that is, to do good, or serve them "with the left hand," to do evil. Good and evil are manifested in the actions of people rather than existing as abstract moral concepts.

Stories about the evil practice of reviving the dead, who are then put to work as *zonbi*-s, and about the creation and use of spells became the main focus of an international introduction to Vodou. Prejudice, sensationalism and ignorance continue to dominate the outsiders' concept of Vodou--a result of sensationalist literature and media coverage. In colonial times, reports from the French globetrotter, Moreau de Saint-Méry, set a precedent in superficial observation and European arrogance. Vodou was described as sorcery, magical practice and superstition. Similar reports, mixed with horrific accounts of the killing and expulsion of whites, were spread to the US when colonists fled the slave revolts preceding the Haitian independence. With slavery still in existence in the US at that time, the revolution in Haiti was perceived as a threat. Thus, any outrageous story about Vodou fell upon fertile soil.

After the abolition of slavery in the US, racial equality was still far from being realized. It would take another hundred years before African Americans gained their civil rights. During the American occupation of Haiti (1915-34), the US Marines were strictly divided into groups of white troops and black troops. The attitude of the whites toward the Haitians was based on the philosophy of inequality to which they were accustomed. Seabrook explained in *The Magic Island* (1929) that the Americans not only brought "excellent roads, sewers, hospitals, sanitation, stabilized currency, economic prosperity and political peace" to Haiti but, more importantly, taught the Haitian upper classes race-consciousness.

These urban Haitians, free, vain, independent, and masters in their own land for a long hundred years or more, had accumulated money, education, a literature, an aristocratic tradition, and had somehow

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<sup>199</sup> Zora Neale Hurston remarks about *Gédé*, "Nothing in Haiti is quite so obvious as that this loa is the deification of the common people of Haiti." According to Hurston, the manifestation of *Gédé* "comes as near a social criticism of the classes by the masses as anything in all Haiti." Furthermore she stresses that *Gédé* is "the one loa which is entirely Haitian."

<sup>200</sup> All these examples are taken from Hurbon (1995a), pp. 140-143.

forgotten that God in His infinite wisdom had intended the Negroes to remain always an inferior race. Indeed, as many Americans in Haiti will testify, there were members, whole families and social groups among the upper class, who were proud of being Haitians, proud actually of being Negroes. And one of the most difficult problems of the American occupation has been to teach these people their proper place.<sup>201</sup>

On the other hand, by going into the countryside and making direct observations of Vodou practices, he disregarded segregationist attitudes of other white Americans. On rare occasions, he even suggested that, by comparison, the American culture might actually be lacking, as he noted, "The society of this small West Indian country ... was perhaps a great deal more civilized in some ways than we are,"<sup>202</sup> which revealed a certain admiration for the Haitian culture. Nevertheless, his book The Magic Island presented Vodou in a sensationalist manner, especially in combination with the degrading illustrations by Alexander King. This seems to have been exactly what the American readers wanted. "He had to enter the jungles-- the jungle of the visible island and the Haitian mind," as Carl Van Doren explained when The Magic Island was selected as "The January 1929 Book" of The Literary Guild.<sup>203</sup>

Even more popular was the autobiographical account from Marine Lieutenant F.E. Wirkus that appeared in the 1931 book, The White King of La Gonave. Seabrook too, had devoted one chapter of The Magic Island to Wirkus who had been crowned king by the island inhabitants and with whom he had spent a few weeks on the island of La Gonave. Both books had a powerful influence on the American perception of Vodou and inspired quite a few horror movies.

Among Haiti's upper class, Vodou has been regarded with ambivalence; in the urban setting, Vodou has never been socially sanctioned but practised or used secretly. Even more duplicitous, the political elite have simultaneously condemned and practised Vodou, according to what best served their purposes. The religion of the masses has been publicly denounced, yet secretly used to control them. Mintz & Trouillot speak of a "cultural embezzlement" which "suggests intent and wilful misappropriation."<sup>204</sup> Laënnec Hurbon starts and concludes his article "American Fantasy and Haitian Vodou"<sup>205</sup> by advocating intercultural dialogue and comes to the conclusion,

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<sup>201</sup> Seabrook, pp. 127-128

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 159

<sup>203</sup> WINGS, Vol.3, No.1, January 1929, p. 3

<sup>204</sup> Mintz & Trouillot, p. 133

<sup>205</sup> Hurbon (1995b), pp. 181-197



In truth, the Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou announce and evoke our own strangeness to ourselves, as human beings: they bring us to *das Unheimliche*, to the "disquieting strangeness" of which Freud speaks, and not to *Heimat* (to the comfortable, the rooted, the familiar), and it is for this reason that they open the path to the encounter, to intercultural communication, and more precisely, to the possibility of sharing the human experience to which they bear witness.<sup>206</sup>

## Historic Moments in Connection with Vodou

Slaves were brought to Saint-Domingue beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and their numbers increased dramatically in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *Code Noir*, promulgated by Louis XIV in 1685, declared Catholic baptism to be mandatory for every slave brought to the French-American Islands: "All slaves that shall be in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Faith," (Code Noir, Art. II), and "We forbid any religion other than the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith from being practiced in public," (Code Noir, Art. III).<sup>207</sup> Amidst unspeakable exploitation and suppression, the African religion provided the slaves both refuge and identity in a world that otherwise refused to acknowledge their humanity. Vodou had to be practised in secret and was linked to resistance, disobedience and rebellion. Myths and stories were created around important events associated with Vodou and passed on orally.

A key location in which African rites were cultivated was to be found within the communities of fugitive slaves known as *maroons*, in the Haitian forests and mountains. Saint-Domingue was scarcely populated, so maroon bands took advantage of the isolation and lived on either side of the border adjoining Santo Domingo where they could not easily be traced by the *maréchaussée*--the runaway-chasing militia. One of the early Vodouist heroes was François Makandal, the leader of a group of fugitive slaves. He is said to have committed numerous attacks, using poison, on planters and members of the militia and to have supplied the *maroons* with charms to make them invincible. In 1757, Makandal instigated an unsuccessful slave rebellion. For his crimes, he was sentenced to be burned to death. Legend has it that Makandal managed to jump out of the fire before he was overcome by the soldiers and returned to the fire to die.

Even more famous is the Vodou ceremony at the Bois Caïman (Crocodile Forest), on August 14, 1791, in which the charismatic Vodou leader, Boukman Dutty, gathered a huge crowd of maroons in a ceremony that became the starting point of the slave revolts leading to Haiti's independence. This story has been told and retold until it has become much like a national myth in which no one can tell what is real and what is

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<sup>206</sup> Hurbon (1995b), p. 197

<sup>207</sup> Retrieved June 14, 2007 from <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335>

fantasy. There are historians who question the factual basis for the story altogether.<sup>208</sup> Geggus confines himself to a few proven specifics by stating, "The details of what happened at Bois Caïman thus remain elusive, beyond the fact that a pig was sacrificed by a priestess in some sort of religious ceremony in preparation for war."<sup>209</sup>

Mintz & Trouillot raise doubts regarding the assumption that religion was the main impetus for the revolution:

We believe that the religious orientation of many or even most of the slaves played a part in their resistance to the horrors of slavery. But there were doubtless many individuals and some groups for whom Vodou was not important, perhaps even some who actively rejected it as their religion, yet who played immensely important roles in the Revolution, and in the development of the Republic thereafter.<sup>210</sup>

The declaration of independence had lifted the hopes and pride of all Haitians. When the first leaders tried to reinstall plantation economy by obliging the lower classes to work the farms, there was strong resistance that led to land distribution by the state. From 1825 until mid-century, Haiti was transformed into a nation of peasants. Large, patrilocal families lived on a compound, a *lakou* ("ancestral homestead"), which was a place of living, working and worship. "The Vodou *lwa* were ceremonially invoked, were familial in character, lived in the family's land and played an active part in family life. Thus land, kinship, and cult were intertwined in belief, in ritual construction, and in practice."<sup>211</sup> However, this familial system of ancestral belief, connected to the land and to the past, underwent considerable change in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the peasant economy declined in productivity.

The first Haitian head of state who openly professed to Vodou was Faustin Soulouque (who reigned from 1847 to 1859). The appearance of the Virgin Mary in Saut D'Eau was interpreted by Soulouque as a divine sign in support of his coronation and he ordered a chapel to be built there in her honor. From that time on, Saut D'Eau was recognized as a national sanctuary.<sup>212</sup> Until today, every year in July thousands of pilgrims from all corners of the country take a ritual bath in the waterfalls of Saut D'Eau.

The US occupation (1915-1934) brought profound changes. The upper class was forced to re-evaluate their beliefs. On one hand, they were confronted with their own neglect of the rural sector, but on the other

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<sup>208</sup> Hoffman, referred to by Mintz & Trouillot, p. 138

<sup>209</sup> Quoted by Mintz & Trouillot, p. 138

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 138

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 140

<sup>212</sup> Bernecker, p. 87

hand, they had to deal with North American racist attitudes toward colored people--a group in which, by US standards, they found themselves. Even though the US troops made efforts to develop the countryside, they did not deal very sensitively with the rural population. The peasants had to endure expropriation, coerced migration, and *corvée* ("forced labor" on the roads). Led by Charlemagne Peralte, Caco guerilla bands (up to 15,000 strong) fought against US troops. The guerilla leader and 2,000 followers were killed. The Catholic clergy, mostly French priests, fueled US prejudices and racism by indicting Vodou as the soul of the insurrection against the marines.

In 1935, after the US troops had withdrawn, the Haitian government, in cooperation with the Catholic Church, imposed an anti-Vodou campaign upon the adepts of this faith, and many Vodou temples were demolished. An inquisition-like campaign followed in 1940 and 1941, and peasants were forced to renounce their faith. All that was associated with Vodou was eradicated. In spite of this, the 1940s also witnessed a spectacular emergence of Haitian art onto the international art scene. Key figures associated with this international recognition were Americans De Witt Peters and Seldon Rodman and the French surrealist André Breton. In 1944, Peters acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the *Centre d'Art* in Port-au-Prince, a joint Haitian-American venture. Originally conceived in order to exhibit Haiti's early modernists, the Center proved to be key to the discovery of self-taught Naïve painters such as Philomé Obin, Rigaud Benoît, and Hector Hyppolyte. Rodman, who became co-director of the *Centre d'Art* in 1947, promoted Haitian artists--many inspired by Vodou--and established the association of the Haitian primitive art with the Naïve School of painters within the international community.<sup>213 214 215</sup>

After visiting Haiti in 1945, André Breton attributed true surrealsims to Haitian Naïve art.<sup>216</sup> René Depestre described Breton's conference on surrealism, held in Port-au-Prince, as an extremely inspiring event for young Haitian intellectuals. The publication of Breton's speech in a student newspaper provoked the government to jail the editors and confiscate the paper. Subsequent student strikes and demonstrations finally led to political upheaval in the beginning of 1946.<sup>217</sup> President Lescot, endorsed by the US, was overthrown, and, after several months of military

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<sup>213</sup> Rodman, *Renaissance in Haiti*. 1948

<sup>214</sup> In his second book on Haitian art Rodman described a second renaissance of Haitian art in the 1960s (*The Miracle of Haitian Art*. 1973).

<sup>215</sup> Additional information about Haitian art can be found in Cosentino (1995), Danticat & Demme (1997), Hoffman (1985), Rodman (1988), and Stebich (1992).

<sup>216</sup> Dash, *Culture and Customs of Haiti*. 2001, p. 136

<sup>217</sup> Depestre, "Haitis surrealistische Revolution: André Breton in Port-au-Prince," [Haiti's Surrealist Revolution: André Breton in Port-au-Prince] du, Die Zeitschrift der Kultur. Heft Nr. 2, Februar 1998

dictatorship, *noiriste* Dumarsais Estimé became president. Under Estimé, Vodou found safe haven within the Haitian folklore that stimulated the tourist industry. The unchecked selling of local art and ritual to tourists, however, involved a different kind of challenge, as “no religion or the practices and beliefs associated with it can remain untouched, when it becomes display for non-practitioners. Elements of its practices and beliefs inevitably become somewhat disassociated from their origins, acquiring a life of their own.”<sup>218</sup>

François Duvalier was a self-trained ethnologist who advocated cultural nationalism. He used Vodou to gain power and spread fear. He gave privileges to the Catholic Church, but later expelled the French Archbishop of Port-au-Prince and a number of priests in preparation for the nationalization of the Haitian Catholic clergy. At the same time, he connected many *oungan*-s to his political network of *macoutes*. This was perceived as “Vodou with both hands” and bred much resentment. The fall of the Duvaliers’ dictatorship was followed by the nationwide slaughter of regime supporters--*dechoukaj* (“uprooting”)--which included the killing of about 400 *oungan*-s during 1986 and 1987. This prompted a few Catholic priests to denounce the violence, and some middle class and elite Vodouists openly proclaimed their allegiance to the Vodou faith. A nationwide organization for the defense of Vodou was created--ZANTRAY (Zanfan Tradisyon Ayisyen “Children of the Haitian Tradition”). The constitution of 1987 provided recognition of Vodou as a national religion.<sup>219</sup>

#### 4.4 Personal Observations

While living in Haiti, I had many opportunities to observe and experience different aspects of the Haitian way of life. This is subjective, of course, but nevertheless, from an individual perspective, it illustrates the facts presented in the first section of this chapter.<sup>220</sup>

It was an uplifting experience to see that poverty has not paralyzed the people; they appeared neither apathetic nor lethargic. On the contrary, they were lively and creative--a creativity, or “art,” necessitated by the will to survive. This was demonstrated by boys who (without being asked) helped the *taptap*<sup>221</sup> drivers to squeeze as many passengers as possible into their vehicles by loudly announcing the destinations. The boys received a small tip from the drivers for their service. Another example of

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<sup>218</sup> Mintz & Trouillot, pp. 143-144

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 144-147

<sup>220</sup> Some of these impressions have already been described in Thiel, 1998, pp. 18-19.

<sup>221</sup> Small pick-up truck used for public transportation--they usually go up and down the same road and can be stopped anywhere by people who want to get in or out.

survival artists were the young men competing to earn money by carrying passenger's luggage at Haiti's main airport, Toussaint-L'Ouverture, as well as the shoe shine boys or men offering their service at busy street corners in Port-au-Prince, or going directly to clients' houses. More complex was the business of the market women who would buy their goods at a downtown central market and then sell them at smaller markets or as street vendors. Some would walk from house-to-house to find customers, filling the morning air with loud calls advertising their goods: eggs, bread, beans, soap, plants ... and much more.

Though misery is endured, people constantly seek out opportunities for relief. For example, torrential rains are seen as a chance to take a shower. A different kind of relief is found through the expression of distress. Once, I passed by a young woman on a street who sold vegetables. She was screaming and crying over the loss of something stolen from her. I was surprised at this public way of coping with pain caused by theft. I was even more impressed when, over an hour later, I passed by again and she was still loudly crying out. On another occasion, while on my way home in a *taptap*, the vehicle was suddenly stopped because an accident had occurred between another *taptap* and a truck. At least one hundred people were gathered around the scene, discussing the accident. Fortunately, we were near our apartment and I was able to walk home. Four hours later, the crowds were still blocking the street. In the absence of authority, the people affected by the accident sought to resolve the situation on-the-spot while they could maintain their hold upon the drivers involved.

The house in which we lived was divided into four apartments and was located in a middle-class neighbourhood. The houses in our street were owned or rented by Haitian families; there were no other *blan*-s (white people/foreigners) living there. The surrounding area was mixed, and, within walking distance, there were smaller houses in which poorer people lived. A little further still, were streets upon which were mere tin huts that provided shelter to those engaged in a continuous fight for survival.

We had a friendly relationship with a family in an adjoining apartment, and with several other families in the area. Contact with other people occurred when we required service or trade. One elderly woman came to our home every other morning to sell eggs; one young man came once a week to shine our shoes; another young man was employed by the property owner to maintain the house and yard. Around the corner, was a little shop where we bought basics like rice, noodles, coffee, canned milk, toothpaste, gas for the stove, and water for drinking and cooking. At this shop, we even received phone calls from Germany. At that time, in 1997, securing a telephone connection was still a difficult, time-consuming process, and often there were people waiting to use the shop owner's telephone. When private telephone companies entered the market a few years later, the only necessary qualification for obtaining a telephone was the ability to pay for it.

We employed a woman to come and help with the cooking, cleaning and ironing two or three times a week. At the end of her first day of work, she

came to me and opened her handbag. I did not understand why she had done this. She explained that she wanted to show me that she was honest and had not taken anything from us. Our children still cherish the memory of her cooking. She would start cooking dinner at noon, and it was always a delicious “work of art” that we all enjoyed together.

During the last three months of our stay, we did not have any electricity (a transformer on our street had blown). Our washing machine was completely useless,<sup>222</sup> so we hired a young woman to wash the laundry. When I attempted to pay her at the end of her first day, she said that she did not want the money right away because, if she brought it home, her brothers and sisters would insist on spending it immediately. She preferred to receive the money at the end of the month, as she wanted to save it to pay for a sewing course. I was very impressed by her determination to use the money for her education.

By our standards, we considered our two-bedroom apartment to be quite small for five people. Most Haitians, however, had a different perspective, especially those whose entire families lived in a one-room house. One day, one of our friends, a young man called Jean-Robert, visited us with his mother who came from a small village north of Port-au-Prince. (Since we had visited his family a few months earlier, we knew how small their house was and that they had to walk for 15 minutes to a river in order to wash themselves or do laundry. To obtain drinking water, they had to walk more than half an hour to the nearest potable source.) After talking for some time about how everyone of their family was doing, Jean-Robert’s mother wished to use our bathroom. She did not return for a long time. After more than an hour, Jean-Robert knocked at the door to see if she was okay and—yes, she was! She had simply never before (and probably never afterward) enjoyed the luxuries of a shower, a water closet and a tap with running water—all to herself!

One of the boys that I interviewed in 1998 lived alone in a one-room house not far from our apartment. The dimensions of the house were about 10 feet long, by 10 feet wide, and 10 feet high. It was built of cement bricks, some of which had been removed to allow in air and light, but there was no actual window. It had a wooden door with a lock. Through holes in the tin roof, rain came in freely. On the ceiling, there was a light bulb that could light the room, if electricity was available. Beside the bulb was a hook upon which the boy hung important things like his school bag and bags of clothes. One piece of furniture stood in his room—an iron bed,

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<sup>222</sup> During our entire stay, dealing with this machine was quite an adventure because of the erratic supply of electricity and water. There were several instances in which the current came on in the middle of the night, waking us up because of the light not switched off when the blackout came. This would prove to be the opportune moment to get the laundry started in the machine.

without a mattress, and only cardboard and newspapers upon it. On this street, all the houses had only one room and a tin roof. None of them had running water or a toilet. About 1km away, a public faucet was located, and here the residents would obtain the water they needed using a bucket. Behind the houses, a field was used by the tenants in place of a toilet.

A constant topic of conversation among the neighbours was electricity, just as in Germany, one would often talk about the weather. However, the electricity supply was even more unpredictable. In fact, there was nothing certain about it at all--only a rough rhythm of its coming and going for a time, and then suddenly, without notice--another change. There were no public announcements or published schedules--it just happened. In the newspaper, an occasional article would appear about residents of a certain zone in Port-au-Prince protesting that they had not received electricity for weeks. For those of us supplied continuously with electricity, it is hard to imagine what joy, accompanied by loud music, fills the neighbourhood when the electricity finally returns.

One night, there was an unusual noise outside in our street. It was around 9 p.m. and very dark. The elderly woman that owned the house across from us shouted to someone in the street that they should not do what it was that they were doing.<sup>223</sup> A few male voices replied, but I could not understand what they said. I went out onto the balcony to try to discover what was happening. After my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I saw that people were digging into the unpaved street and working with an electricity cable. Finally, I understood that they were connecting themselves to the current that was supplied to our area.

When we first arrived in Haiti, we were supplied with electricity for about 8 hours each day, and there were even occasional weekends without blackouts. Gradually, however, our daily electricity supply decreased until, in 2001, we had only two or three hours per day. Ultimately, our street was completely cut off from the official distribution of electricity. Some of our neighbours had generators; some had arranged for a connection to a source from a nearby area (and profited from that electricity supply), and others simply endured the *blakawout*<sup>224</sup>.

The sense of family in Haiti is shaped by the will to survive as a family. When parents (or a mother) sacrifice their own comfort and well-being in order to send their children to school, the children in turn, support their parents or younger siblings with the resulting income. They are expected to do so, but this is usually not felt as a burdensome duty, it is rather seen

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<sup>223</sup> She was always very clear about what she thought was right or wrong. One time, she told our son, that it was too dangerous for him to play in the street, and that if she saw him doing it again, she would beat him up.

<sup>224</sup> Creole word for blackout

as an important responsibility<sup>225</sup>. The following experience that we had, just after arriving in Haiti, has to be understood within the context of Haitian family survival strategies.

In 1997, friends took us on a trip to a small town in the *Plateau Central* where we stayed with the family of a pastor. He and his wife had seven children, the smallest one about six-months old. Our children played with their children, and were especially enamoured of the baby girl whom they took turns holding. Without our knowledge, the little girl's ten-year-old brother asked my daughters if they wanted to take the baby along. Our daughters liked the idea, and so the boy replied that he would first have to get his parents' approval. We could not believe our ears when the pastor approached us the next day and said, "I heard you wanted to take our baby along. I discussed it with my wife and we are happy to give you our baby."

The parents believed that we were better able to take care of their baby and to give her a good education, so they were willing to sacrifice and give her away. At the same time, they recognized that their whole family might well benefit from this arrangement sooner or later.

A nurturing sense of family was also present in the society at large. I was grateful to find this public conscience in a group of *taptap* passengers when my son, then nine years old, wanted to sit in the vehicle's most precarious seat. The other passengers immediately shifted to create a safer place for him, all the while being friendly to him, but insisting that he had no choice, he simply had to sit there.

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<sup>225</sup> In *Sleeping Rough in Port-au-Prince* Kovats-Bernat mentions children who live and work in the streets, yet manage to send money to their natal homes (p. 72).



## THEY SAY

They say  
human blood  
enriches the soil

If it were so  
if it were so  
my friends

rice millet and corn  
would be plenty  
in Haiti<sup>226</sup>

## 5 The Rural Space

There has been much scholarly analysis of Haiti's urban-rural dichotomy in which "urban" signified the wealthy, educated, well-read, French-speaking, Catholic elite and "rural" was associated with the poor, illiterate masses, raised in the Creole oral tradition, serving the *lwa*-s, and struggling to survive by cultivating the soil in isolated areas. Leyburn stated, for example, that in Haiti social "distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term."<sup>227</sup> <sup>228</sup>When Herskovits described the valley and the town of Mirebalais, where he did his anthropological studies in 1934, he used the attribute "essential isolation."<sup>229</sup> While a stark contrast between the wealthy elite and the poor majority continues to be a sad reality, more recent studies have concentrated on the interdependences that have always connected these two subcultures and on changes that have occurred as a result of peasants' economic difficulties and subsequent migration to towns and cities.<sup>230</sup> As Port-au-Prince and other cities are honeycombed with people from the countryside--who often end up in densely populated slums--the ruralization of the cities<sup>231</sup> has decomposed class distinctions based upon locale.

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<sup>226</sup> Baron, Suze. In Laraque & Hirschman, pp. 148-149

<sup>227</sup> Leyburn, *The Haitian People*. 1941, p. 109

<sup>228</sup> In "*Classe ou caste? Etude sur 'The Haitian People' (Le peuple haïtien)*", de James G. Leyburn" (1942), Price-Mars argued against this classification.

<sup>229</sup> Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*. 1937, p. 4

<sup>230</sup> Dash, *Culture and Customs of Haiti*. 2001, p. 40

<sup>231</sup> Faustin, Charles Daly. *Nouveaux horizons de la société rurale haïtienne* [New Horizons of the Rural Haitian Society]. 2003, p. 7

At the same time most of the people who remained in the countryside have some kind of connection to a city. Some have family members living and working in the capital, or children going to school in the nearest city. Some are in regular contact with markets within the city--either to sell goods produced in the countryside or to purchase goods to sell back in their village. Others have family members living and working in the US, Canada or the Dominican Republic and are supported by them. International non-governmental organizations are also present in many rural areas. All of these contacts have breached the social boundaries of rural isolation for some time, and so the people in the countryside have had ample opportunities to develop their concepts of globalization.

In order to present a variety of perspectives of rural Haiti, I include in this chapter four recent studies that focused upon different aspects of the rural Haitian society. All of these studies were based on extensive observation and in-depth interviews, some also included systematic surveys. They were conducted in different geographical areas of Haiti and were the products of diverse theoretical backgrounds in the fields of anthropology, sociology, geography and environmental science. The topics of these studies were: the reasons for a high fertility rate in Haiti's poorest region--the north-western peninsula; lessons that can be learned from Haitian peasants; the potential of Haitian grass roots organizations to reduce poverty; and the dynamic of reciprocal influence that occurs when the development discourses of NGOs and rural people are brought together.

## **5.1 Reproductive Concepts in Northern Haiti**

In his anthropological research,<sup>232</sup> Schwartz attempted to find reasons for the continuously high fertility rate in and around the north-western Haitian town of Jean Rabel. He investigated why the introduction of contraceptive use to the population had so little impact, despite more than a decade of internationally-funded, family-planning campaigns. Local surveys in Jean Rabel, carried out in connection with his research, showed a Total Fertility Rate of 7.1 births per woman, which, in the year 2000, was equivalent to the second highest birth rate of any country in the world<sup>233</sup> and was 48% higher than the overall Total Fertility Rate of 4.8 births per woman for all of Haiti in that year.

The questions that Schwartz explored were: Why had 50 years of costly foreign-sponsored interventions, aimed at changing traditional farming and health-care practices, had little lasting impact, and why the "farmers in the region have remained indifferent, passively or actively rejecting and

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<sup>232</sup> Schwartz, Children Are the Wealth of the Poor: High Fertility and the Organization of Labor in the Rural Economy of Jean Rabel, Haiti. 2000.

<sup>233</sup> In UN statistics for the year 2000 only Niger had a higher rate with 7.25 births per woman (as cited in Schwartz, p. 109).

resisting projects intended to promote their well-being."<sup>234</sup> In contrast to visiting experts who searched the "Haitian mind" for answers that explained this resistance, Schwartz' study "focuses on external, observable, environmental, and economic conditions."<sup>235</sup> He argued that, in spite of foreign interventions, the physical conditions--a harsh environment requiring an extensive amount of manual labor-- had remained the same for the inhabitants of Jean Rabel. Thus, the persistence of a high fertility rate could be seen as a survival strategy in response to the continuous need for laborers.

Schwartz referred to the high fertility rate and the rejection of contraceptive use in rural Haiti as "part of a definitively pronatal socio-cultural fertility complex involving attitudes, customs, laws, and beliefs."<sup>236</sup> This complex was manifested when the birth of a child was seen as a blessing, in the high regard extended exclusively to a mother or father (childless women and men are ridiculed), in the lack of any advocacy of abstinence from pre-marital sex,<sup>237</sup> in the social pressure against abortion, in the socially-sanctioned polygynous unions, and in a procreative set of mystical beliefs.

This "pronatal socio-cultural fertility complex" was proposed by Schwartz to be a survival strategy of the people living in the challenging environmental, technological, and economic conditions of Jean Rabel, where farming is the main source of income for 90% of the households. Without electricity, running water, and mechanized labor-saving devices, daily subsistence tasks<sup>238</sup> in these households were labor-intensive and required a tremendous amount of time. The presence of children in the household to assist with these tasks was indispensable.

Schwartz elaborated further by explaining that, for a resident of Jean Rabel, it was vital to belong to a household,<sup>239</sup> as "virtually all tasks necessary for production and participation in the regional economy are accomplished within the organizational structure of the household."<sup>240</sup> If only a few people lived in a household, each one would have to do more work to sustain the family unit, however, "with increasing numbers of

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<sup>234</sup> Schwartz, p. 6

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 7

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>237</sup> "First pregnancies almost always occur outside of a conjugal union and no matter what the circumstances, pregnancy, in and of itself, is never a source of shame" (p. 26).

<sup>238</sup> The principal livelihoods in the commune were the planting of gardens and the raising of livestock.

<sup>239</sup> In this connection, Schwartz explained that "the building of a house is the single most important event that occurs in the legitimization of a conjugal union" (p. 250).

<sup>240</sup> Schwartz, p. 196

household members, there is a relative decline in the workload required of each member."<sup>241</sup> While the women usually managed the domestic tasks, the men worked in the garden and with the animals. Children were usually assigned the tasks of fetching water, gathering firewood, cooking, cleaning, going to the market, working in the garden, and tending livestock. When Schwartz asked parents in an opinion survey if they could live without children, 97% of the men and women answered in much the same way as this 39 year-old father of 6 children:

No. I cannot live without children... If I need one to go to the village, I send him. If I need one to go for wood, I send him. They can't tell me no... Not one of them can stand in front of me and say no. We pull together.<sup>242</sup>

Schwartz clarified that these farmers were referring to young children, not to adult children, and that the relationship was reciprocal--the children worked for the adults and the adults took responsibility for the children. One thing that the adults did for the children was to send them to school. According to Schwartz, one of the few changes that had occurred in the region was in regard to schooling. "Adults in Jean Rabel can still recall a time when education was unnecessary, when reserves of land and livestock were sufficient for children to stay in Jean Rabel and establish their own household and families."<sup>243</sup> With the continuous growth in population,<sup>244</sup> however, land had become more scarce, and, consequently, grown-up children could not easily be given plots for their own families.

Thus, the alternative for some of the children became migration, which was only possible with basic schooling. This shift in favor of schooling became evident "in the fact that while 85% of children in Jean Rabel are currently enrolled in school, more than half of rural Jean Rabel adults have no education at all."<sup>245</sup> A dramatic increase in school enrolment had occurred in only one generation! The fact that a certain level of schooling was prerequisite to finding a job in the capital or abroad had persuaded the parents that schooling their children was an investment in the future. Once these children had migrated and began to receive income from a job, they would be able to support the household(s) of their kin.

Education and emigration had replaced farming as the first choice for the children's future. Some children were needed to stay and maintain the household and farming activities, while other children were needed for education in preparation for urban or overseas employment--the need for

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<sup>241</sup> Schwartz, p. 196

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 216

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 326

<sup>244</sup> Between 1982 and 1997 Jean Rabel's population had doubled (p. 84).

<sup>245</sup> Schwartz, p. 327

many children was unbroken.<sup>246</sup> A more traditional form of migration still occurred when there was not enough money for schooling--children were sent to work for wealthier families in a city or in the capital, for which the original family received monetary compensation. Even this tradition of sending children to stay with (*restavèk*, see 1.1, 4.1, and 10.1) and work for other families "contributes to the maximization of regional fertility levels by removing what might otherwise be the aversive fertility dampening consequences of too many children under the same roof."<sup>247</sup>

As an example of international interventions that had "backfired," Schwartz described the failure of World Bank policies of the early 1980s. One of these policies discouraged the erosion-causing hillside-farming of grain and bean staples in favor of the production of tree crops for export. The subsequent flooding of the Haitian market with imported and subsidized staples destroyed what remained of the local market, while the development of tree crops never occurred. The result was an emigration to the city by those Jean Rabel farmers who could afford it, "but the poor and illiterate majority ... have responded by withdrawing even further into the local economy, into traditional household livelihood strategies, and into relying on the continued high production of children for labor."<sup>248</sup> The remaining "Jean Rabel parents maximize the greatest source of wealth they have access to, children. They bear as many as 'God gives them' and they hope that God gives them many."<sup>249</sup>

In the context of child labor, Schwartz explains the prevalent practice of whipping children. In a follow-up to his opinion survey, he asked parents for what reason they had last hit their children. Negligence was the reason given by 26% of the respondents, 25% said that their children were whipped because of disrespect and 24% stated the reason to be that the children were not performing their chores. According to Schwartz, negligence and disrespect were most often connected to the performance of chores. Since he had lived in different areas of Jean Rabel and seen how often the parents whipped their children, he resolved not to ask "if" they hit their children, but "for what reason."

Also in regard to the issue of corporal punishment, Schwartz related his own experience in a village near Jean Rabel, where he had first lived and gathered data. He recounted, "I was an especially easy target for bored young men who wanted to amuse themselves with hazing me."<sup>250</sup> He left the village but returned about two months later, having improved his Creole skills, and also having learned how better to deal with such

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<sup>246</sup> Schwartz, p. 324-326

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 328

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 329

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 328

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 37

situations. Schwartz remembered: "Perhaps the most symbolic moment came when I realized that for certain severe offences I could whip the children, something I did only once and for which I cringe with US liberalism to think about, but something that had miraculous results."<sup>251</sup>

In a footnote, Schwartz explained the circumstances<sup>252</sup>: "To justify what some readers might object to as unnecessarily violent behavior on my part, here is what happened. While my hands were otherwise occupied holding a heavy load over my head, three thirteen year old pranksters thought it amusing to take turns squeezing my groin. My cursing only made them squeeze more and laugh harder at what they seemed to think was a hysterically funny thing to be doing -- and in retrospect it may have been funny but not, at the time, to me. In any case, after hunting down and soundly switching the boys in front of the entire community -- who found the pranksters' howling as hilarious as the pranksters had found my cursing -- I became a new persona. It was as if I had just had my community membership approved."<sup>253</sup>

## 5.2 Lessons from Haitian Peasants

Another perspective is taken by Smith. In her anthropological study,<sup>254</sup> she decided to look "specifically at lessons we stand to learn from the country's poorest citizens--its rural peasantry."<sup>255</sup> She refers to Trouillot who stated:

Any solution to the Haitian crisis must find its roots in the resources of the peasantry ... And to do this, ... intellectuals, politicians and planners--foreign and Haitian alike--[must] talk less about (or 'for') the peasantry and begin listening more attentively to what its diverse subgroups have said in the past and have to say now about their own future.<sup>256</sup>

Smith described her book, in which she focused on the "words and practices of Haitian peasants themselves," as being, in part, an answer to that call. She attempted to document their struggle toward "a more decent tomorrow" in several ways. First, she traced "the historical roots of the peasantry's current situation," and then she described "the collective strategies its members have developed" as well as "the spiritual and

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<sup>251</sup> Schwartz, p. 38

<sup>252</sup> I include this passage to add another perspective to the topic of corporal punishment which is discussed in 10.4.

<sup>253</sup> Schwartz, p. 40

<sup>254</sup> Smith, When the Hands Are Many: Community Organization and Social Change in Rural Haiti. 2001.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>256</sup> Trouillot, Haiti--State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism. 1990, pp. 229-30 (as quoted in Smith p. 2)

cultural resources they have called on for help."<sup>257</sup> The rural tradition of offering a respectful greeting was chosen by Smith as a symbol for her approach to ethnographic research--the visitor calls *honè* ("honor") as he or she approaches a property and waits for the answer *respè* ("respect") before he or she enters.

According to Smith, Haitian farmers had never constituted an isolated population; rather, they had always been an integral part of the Haitian economy.

Their constant engagement in commerce, labor migration, dispersed family networks, and a host of other systems reveals that rural Haitians, far from being "out there," are right in the midst of processes that increasingly characterize our thoroughly transbordered world.<sup>258</sup>

In describing their cultural and social wealth on individual, and smaller and larger group levels, Smith attempted to demonstrate the following:

Haitian peasants, in organizing together and constructing analyses of their situation, are not simply responding to or reacting against the forces pressing down upon them. They also are pro-actively thinking, working, mobilizing, and speaking *from* a multifaceted and shifting base of social, cultural, and material resources, and *toward* the realization of a number of positive visions about what a society should be.<sup>259</sup>

Smith also described in detail the Haitian habit of *voye pwen* ("sending points"), that is to "send critical messages through indirect comments or actions ... from neighbor to neighbor, from 'little man' to 'big man', from wife to husband, from employee to employer, from peasant to politician,"<sup>260</sup> most commonly through the medium of song ("*chante pwen*"). It might be an individual, spontaneous song that stems from tensions between village inhabitants, or it might be a reflection of how the peasantry perceives the ruling class or the government, "By singing *pwen*-s rural Haitians are able to both exploit their society's discursive and behavioral mores and, at times, to push against the limits of those mores."<sup>261</sup>

The special artistic challenge, according to Smith, was composing the language of these songs in such a way that the symbols used in them were "transparent enough to ensure that the message gets across but ambiguous enough to protect the singer from becoming a target for

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<sup>257</sup> Smith, p. 3

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 42-43

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 47

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 48

retaliation."<sup>262</sup> These creatively invented songs served a variety of purposes.

Some are performed only once, heard only by a handful of people, and then fade with the passing of the occasion for which they were composed. Others have been passed from person to person, neighborhood to neighborhood, region to region, generation to generation. Some have traveled the length and breadth of the country, and many have been sung for many decades. As they are circulated and passed down, they are edited and elaborated to respond to the unique circumstances in which they are performed.<sup>263</sup>

These songs "provide people who generally find themselves silenced in relation to the powers that be with a way to broadcast their sentiments," and simultaneously, their invention and performance facilitate the creation and expression of a proud identity. "As they compose, perform, and disseminate *chante pwen-s*, Haitian peasants actively challenge their reputation as unenlightened and hapless victims of chronic oppression and actively reformulate both individual and collective identities."<sup>264</sup> <sup>265</sup>

Smith followed with an explanation of the concept of *yonn ede lòt* ("one helping another") which is expressed in rural Haiti through customs of sharing labor and resources. She described collective efforts in agriculture such as *konbit* ("working together") and *kovè* ("group work") as well as the traditional community groups, *atribisyon* and *sosyete* that she observed in rural south-western Haiti. The members of an *atribisyon* (about 7 to 12 workers) met several times a week for agricultural work sessions on each other's land; the group was also hired to work on other people's land or for different types of work. The payment for their work was only due near the end of the year, which made it easier for other farmers to hire them since, by then, they had profited from the harvest.

Rather than distributing the money that the group had earned among its members, they preferred to use it to buy food for the Haitian Independence Day celebration on January 1<sup>st</sup>. To celebrate their independence in 1804, their ancestors had slaughtered cattle and eaten meat with *soup joumou* ("pumpkin stew"). In the same tradition, the members of an *atribisyon* bought a cow or goat and divided it so that each

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<sup>262</sup> Smith, p. 48

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 48-49

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 67

<sup>265</sup> In the cities, Carnival is the largest stage for popular songs, amplified music, and publicly sponsored costumes. In the countryside, however, less costly masqueraded *rara* bands perform their songs, accompanied by authentic music on self-made bamboo tubes and percussion instruments, as they travel between villages and towns from January to Easter.



of them would get the same amount of meat. The January 1<sup>st</sup> celebrations (which lasted into the next few days) presented a stark contrast to the everyday scarcity<sup>266</sup> during the rest of the year. One of Smith's informants explained, "But although, yes, we are poor, we *are humans*, and we should be able to eat meat, even if it's only once a year!"<sup>267</sup>

The *sosyete-s* were larger groups--from 50 to well over a hundred members. These groups had a more complex structure,<sup>268</sup> they appeared with pomp and circumstance, and their members came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. They too, were engaged in collective agricultural labor, some of them hosted religious ceremonies, and others provided entertainment for their communities. When hired, they put most of the money that they earned into a mutual aid fund. With the help of this fund, they offered their members assistance and support during times of sickness and death.

What the *sosyete-s* offer here, then, is a sort of informal life insurance policy – but more than that. By "surrounding" them in times of crisis, they also ensure their members that they will not have to take on the most trying moments of their lives alone.<sup>269</sup>

Some groups also provided an informal judicial system, independent from the state court system "renowned for humiliating and exploiting poor Haitians."<sup>270</sup> A number of these *sosyete-s* had existed for several generations and membership had been passed on from within families. Smith reflected:

The *sosyete-s'* long-term success at structuring and organizing communal labor tasks in an ever more challenging environment cannot be understood without acknowledging the ways they have combined seemingly incongruent characteristics – hierarchy with egalitarian values, long-suffering work with fun-loving play, and performance with worship.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Smith related her observations, "Many a morning and afternoon I had listened for hours to the droning cries of the youngest ones, who had not yet learned the futility of weeping for want of food" (p. 99). (See also Alvarez & Murray. *Socialization for Scarcity*, 1981)

<sup>267</sup> Smith, p. 101

<sup>268</sup> Smith lists 15 different leadership positions, among them: the President, the Army General, the Secretary, the Treasurer, The Depot Mistress/Queen, The Silencing General; those without an office are referred to as Soldiers. (pp. 106-108)

<sup>269</sup> Smith, p. 132

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 104

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 113

In her conclusion, Smith presented a number of themes connected to the peasants' "multifaceted vision about what a good society should be" that had emerged from her data. In numerous discussions, the peasants had voiced their vision of a society "in which everyone would have a certain degree of financial and material security.". Stark disparities in which some people "get ice in their glasses every day" and others "have to walk miles to get cruddy water" were perceived as unjust. In a good society, "everyone should work, and everyone should benefit from the work that is done." At the same time, there was a need for "individuals who are willing and able to lead the others, to 'care for' them, and to 'stand for' them."<sup>272</sup>

An equally important feature of this society would be respect. "A society of respect would be a society in which people come to one another's aid not out of charity but out of a recognition of its members' profound interdependence."<sup>273</sup> Other shared convictions were that "all citizens must be allowed to speak and to be heard," that the culture had to be "consistent with the desires of their ancestral and spiritual guides,"<sup>274</sup> and that work, play and performance should not be separated. Furthermore, the just society should offer access to basic social services for all its citizens and provide personal and collective security.

### 5.3 Social Capital in Grass Roots Organizations

In her sociological study,<sup>275</sup> Trentmann analysed the dimensions and characteristics of social capital<sup>276</sup> in rural Haitian grass roots organizations. Based on group discussions in Haiti's *Plateau Central*, Trentmann investigated the potential of social capital to reduce poverty. Contrary to the traditional organizations described by Smith, Trentmann's focus was on organizations that were founded mostly in the 1990s. Smaller local groups had merged and created larger organizational structures to increase their influence and to qualify for international funding of local development projects.

*Mete tet ansanm* ("put your heads together") was the main theme of all group discussions, while trust, reciprocity, solidarity, and collective action characterised their understanding of *mete tet ansanm*. "Generally, the results of the research show the possibilities to mobilize social capital that

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<sup>272</sup> Smith, p. 178-182

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 185

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 189

<sup>275</sup> Trentmann, *Mete Tet Ansanm – Steckt die Köpfe zusammen! Sozialkapital in ländlichen Basisorganisationen Haitis. Potential zur Minderung der Armut?* [Put Your Heads Together! Social Capital in Rural Haitian Grass Roots Organizations. Is There Potential for Poverty Alleviation?]. 2004

<sup>276</sup> In her English Abstract Trentmann explains social capital "as a set of resources to optimise social action."

can be used by their members as well as by development agencies towards poverty alleviation."<sup>277</sup> In this context, Trentmann described the utility of the social capital generated in these groups in relation to five different dimensions of poverty.

- Concerning the economic dimension, a certain improvement of the individual group member's income was rendered possible by agricultural cooperation and by a more effective commercializing of goods. The organization provided security for innovation and for cases of emergency, and thus helped its members to maintain subsistence. Mechanisms of micro-credits were additionally useful in promoting a modest economic growth. This was, however, limited to the resources of the organization. On a larger level, these groups were motivated and had some social capital to invest in community development but were still in need of financial input from national or international development agencies.
- In a human dimension, related to the improvement of social living conditions, the group members expressed the benefits of sharing knowledge about health, nutrition and technology. This demand for education was met by externally-educated group members. Even though this transfer of knowledge could not replace professional education, human capital was developed and reinforced based upon bonds between group members living under similar conditions.
- In the political dimension, Trentmann recognized the high potential for social capital to reduce poverty by increased social participation. In the arena of developing democratic practices, the grass roots organizations had established a culture that provided forums for discussion of conflicts, articulation of individual interests and training in methods of negotiation in order to find solutions and ways of cooperation. Trentmann suggested that this helpful resource should be used to discover alternative ways of improving local living conditions.
- In a socio-cultural dimension, the informants' affiliation with grass roots organizations raised the level of esteem accorded to them by their peers and commanded more respect from economic and political partner organizations. *Tet ansanm* provided a feeling of belonging, hope for the future, and a way to escape the social isolation of a neglected rural locale.
- In the dimension of security and protection for their members, these organizations proved especially beneficial and had a positive effect on their living conditions. In all discussions, support and protection in cases of emergency was an important point and included assistance on the occasion of an illness or death of a family member. Also mentioned was that in the case of a natural disaster, the members of the organization could rely on each other's solidarity.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Cited from her English Abstract.

<sup>278</sup> Trentmann, pp. 203-206

Trentmann concluded that social capital had historically been and continued to be developed in the rural Haitian grass roots organizations; the peasants themselves, however, regarded it simply as a strategy to cope with poverty. Also noted was that the cultivation of democratic strategies in these groups should be recognized as an important asset of social capital that could be utilized in development projects. In smaller groups of 20 to 30 people, group solidarity was easily manifested, whereas in larger organizations, a sense of equal representation was more difficult to achieve. However, since the small rural organizations could not progress beyond the limits of their own resources, they faced the dilemma of needing to unite with other groups to gain the advantages of a larger organization. The consequence of this union was that they were forced to deal with more professional organizational structures, oriented toward productivity and efficiency, and involving new power relations, dependencies and obligations--removed from the original "grass roots."

Nevertheless, given the extremely unfair distribution of resources and services in the Haitian society, even the larger rural organizations did not have much potential for poverty reduction without national support or cooperative arrangements with international development agencies. In light of this, Trentmann recommended that development agencies become more acquainted with these rural grass roots organizations and include them in the rural development projects. It was also emphasized that the best use of the social capital in these organizations would be realised by making them active participants in not only the execution of a foreign-designed project, but also in the conceptualization of the goals that it is meant to achieve. Trentmann also cautioned against blue-eyed cooperation with rural organizations, as some of these groups represented no long-term solidarity and had only been set up to land a project.

#### **5.4 Concepts of Development in Central Haiti**

In his study<sup>279</sup> of the interaction of local and outside NGO development discourses, Vander Zaag adopted a post-developmental perspective "which sees discourses of development and underdevelopment as pervasive forces which shape identities, knowledges and relations of power in much of the southern world."<sup>280</sup> He applied this perspective to an analysis of the development concepts of different actors involved in several NGO community development programs in Maissade, a rural community in Haiti's *Plateau Central*. With his research, he attempted "to show that 'what happens' in a development program can only be understood in terms

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<sup>279</sup> Vander Zaag, "We Do Not Yet Have Development": Encounters of Development Knowledges, Identities and Practices in a NGO Program in Rural Haiti. 1999

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 2-3

of the encounter of these knowledges and identities concerning development."<sup>281</sup>

After describing how the character of Haiti's rural economy "has been shaped by the dominant discourses and practices of colonization, neocolonialism and development, creating its current state of 'underdevelopment',"<sup>282</sup> Vander Zaag discussed his investigation of the practices and strategies of both foreign NGO actors and local community actors while carrying out community projects in Maissade. Vander Zaag came to the conclusion that for the NGO, "the community associations are a key strategic element of its program interventions aimed at empowerment and sustainability, while local people in general were enthusiastic in embracing the associations, and saw them as important symbolic representations of, and material avenues towards, 'development'."<sup>283</sup>

Vander Zaag offers an example in which the advantages of a grain-storing project have been redefined by the local people: "Among the most difficult was getting members who had either been advanced association funds to purchase grain to deliver the grain promptly, or who had been advanced grain on credit to repay that credit once they had marketed the grain."<sup>284</sup> There was a tendency to delay the delivery of purchased grain in order to make personal profits, even if this reduced the profits of their association's enterprise.

Another "instance of strategic manipulation" related by Vander Zaag regarded the motivations of local women for joining a foreign-sponsored literacy program. Rather than doing so because of their desire to achieve literacy, participants stated that they wanted to support the trainer (who would lose the monthly stipend if the group became too small), and that they, too, hoped to become a trainer after they had completed the literacy program.<sup>285</sup>

In northern development discourses, empowerment and participation were understood to be reinforcements of abilities and resources within previously marginal groups, but, according to Vander Zaag, in local understanding, "empowerment becomes the ability of the community to organize itself and make claims in order to access external development resources, and in a similar manner, participation becomes the ability of the community, through its association, to establish external relations that

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<sup>281</sup> Vander Zaag, p. 19

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 111

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 208

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 182

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 294

allow it to participate in the development programs that are operating in the region."<sup>286</sup>

In all the development programs that he investigated, Vander Zaag found the same patterns in which "relations of power were constantly negotiated and contested, as the 'powerful' outside development agency attempted to successfully assert its model of development, and local people found multiple ways to subvert and redefine the impacts of development interventions." According to Vander Zaag, these programs "repeat patterns that have been ongoing in rural Haiti for decades – outsiders attempting to come in to achieve certain goals, and local people resisting, adapting, and manoeuvring as best they can."<sup>287</sup>

The result of this negotiating and contesting was that the specific intentions of the outside actors were rarely achieved. Vander Zaag suggested that, instead, the encounter of these different development discourses produced results that no one had intended, "The implementation of these programs produces a 'powerful' yet subjectless set of relations in rural Haiti, beyond the intentions of any single actor."<sup>288</sup>

Of his experiences while attempting to conduct his investigation, Vander Zaag explained that "the power relations inherent in the research encounter mean the researcher cannot simply discover an otherwise 'already-there' knowledge or interpretation." Repeatedly, he had the impression that his presence in a meeting became "an occasion for performance rather than simply the collection of information." In contrast to his perception of himself as a researcher, he was considered a development agent; as the villagers had no concept of research, he was perceived as someone who could channel outside resources into their community. He expressed his dilemma as follows, "I am studying 'development,' ... but I am also inescapably identified and associated with what 'development' is."<sup>289</sup> Reflecting upon his initial attempts to apply a participatory research strategy, he stated:

My theoretical understandings and interpretations seemed to be far removed from the everyday understandings of local people. The discontinuities in our knowledges and identities remained significant barriers and prevented genuine participation, collaboration and 'sharing' of 'power' and knowledge. The research did not become a joint product.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Vander Zaag, p. 179

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 295

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 296

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 319-320

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 318-319. In this connection see also the quotations from Vander Zaag's study in 3.4.

The outcome is undefined, as "'community development' is neither simply either good or bad, oppressively dominating or empowering and liberating. Rather, it is multivalent, subject to change and multiple uses in the ebb and flow of ongoing struggles."<sup>291</sup> Nonetheless, the potential productivity of future interactions could be enhanced if development practitioners would strive "to analyse and acknowledge the differential power relations inherent in the discourse of development in which they work."<sup>292</sup> Apart from this endeavour, we must accept that we have "to work within these discourses for the values and principles in which we believe."<sup>293</sup> Finally, in the field of development, using common sense and creativity combined with caution and modesty are suggested:

...working for social change is more an art than a science – the art of helping enough to produce change and make a difference, but not so much that local understandings and intentions are distorted and overwhelmed by the outside resources and practices.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Vander Zaag, p. 335

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 338

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 339

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 339

## 6 The Emergence of the Haitian Education System

The historical roots of the Haitian education system are traced in this chapter. The main sources from which this representation is formed, are Tardieu,<sup>295</sup> Fouchard<sup>296</sup> and Fass.<sup>297</sup> In their publications, Tardieu described and analysed the history of education in Haiti from colonial times to 1980, Fouchard specialized in education during the colonial system, and Fass investigated Haiti's educational progress from an economic point of view with a focus on the 1970s and 1980s.

All things considered, there were not really any significant attempts to create a school system that responded specifically to the unique aspects of Haitian culture, nor did any government ever earnestly plan steps toward universal access to quality schooling. At every stage of educational development, the interests of the Haitian elite and international influence determined the rules and the direction. The ruling classes made sure that good quality education remained scarce, expensive and urban. Aside from the costs of education,<sup>298</sup> until recently, the terms of admission into primary school even included basic knowledge of French - a foreign language to all but children of the elite.

In contrast to this highly selective access to education, a series of government resolutions, reports and legal commitments toward free public education reflected awareness of educational ideals on the part of various politicians, but proved to be nothing more than empty declarations of intention. For the children of the masses, educational opportunities gradually began to improve from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 6.1 Education Before and During Colonial Times

For the sake of completeness and in recognition of the original inhabitants of the island, some explanations of the educational practices of the Taino Amerindians, as told by Bolay,<sup>299</sup> constitute the beginning of this section. Regarding the period of time when slavery existed, Tardieu described how education took place on two diametrically opposed levels: On one hand was colonial education, designed to support the class-based social system

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<sup>295</sup> Tardieu, *L'éducation en Haïti de la période coloniale à nos jours (1980)* [Education in Haiti from Colonial Times to Our Days (1980)]. 1990. This book will be referred to as "Tardieu" throughout this chapter.

<sup>296</sup> Fouchard, *Les marrons du syllabaire*. 1988a. This book will be referred to as "Fouchard" throughout this chapter.

<sup>297</sup> Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival*. 1990, chapter 6 "Schooling" pp. 235-277. Here referred to as "Fass".

<sup>298</sup> This involved school fees, books, uniforms, shoes, as well as the loss of working hours for the household.

<sup>299</sup> Bolay, pp. 23-36



and to Christianize the slaves; on the other hand was maroon<sup>300</sup> education, shared secretly within the slave community and serving as a way to preserve and adapt the African identity and heritage through knowledge of worship, healing, communication and social relations.

### Amerindian Ways of Education

The island's Taino<sup>301</sup> culture emerged around 800 to 900 AD. Villages were located in the coastal areas or on the plains of the interior. Typically, the houses, which were made of wood and leaves, were built around a central open area used for festivities and games. The women planted vegetables and fruits, and the men would hunt and fish. Although spread far and wide over the island, the Tainos shared one language which had no written form. Informal education took place during day-to-day activities which included: cultivating the soil by mounding it into small hills upon which vegetables were planted, building large canoes, making hammocks, producing pottery decorated with ornaments, creating cave-paintings, and fabricating gold jewelry. Growing up within the Taino (which means "the good") culture, children learned to peacefully share whatever nature would yield to them.

The Taino gods lived in heaven and appeared in nature; protective spirits were also present. The Tainos tried to please their gods through rituals and ceremonies. During their festivities, ritual dances were performed and songs were played, accompanied by musical instruments. Aside from their religious purpose, these celebrations served as an opportunity to educate. Traditional stories of their people were told and retold and appeared in their songs as well. Each of these events served as the sanctuary, school and library of the Taino culture. The central village space was also used as an arena for ball games in which two teams of 20 to 30 men played with a ball made of rubber from the local gum tree.<sup>302</sup>

### Official Colonial Education

Christianization of the slaves was an integral part of the colonial system. The noble religious goals were a convenient fig leaf behind which the shame of slavery could be hidden. Colonial landowners brought French Catholic priests to the colony to provide Christian instruction. This

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<sup>300</sup> The term is related to fugitive slaves, see explanations in 4.2, it also connotes a cultural trait of taking inner refuge as response to repression.

<sup>301</sup> There is not much known about their predecessors, the Siboneyes (before 5000 B.C.), the Igneris (around 4000 B.C.) and the Subtainos the more immediate ancestors of the Tainos.

<sup>302</sup> A detailed description of the Taino culture compared to other Amerindian cultures in different Caribbean and South American regions can be found in Dyckerhoff (1994).

instruction included the elimination of African religious practices and the reinforcement of racial inequality - the slaves should know and respect their God-given place in society. The *Code noir*, promulgated in an edict by the French King Louis XIV in 1685, regulated the conditions of slavery. Two articles regarding the slaves' religious education and the prohibition of practising other religions are quoted in the following:

All slaves that shall be in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith. We enjoin the inhabitants who shall purchase newly-arrived Negroes to inform the Governor and Intendant of said islands of this fact within no more than eight days, or risk being fined an arbitrary amount. They shall give the necessary orders to have them instructed and baptized within a suitable amount of time. (Article II)

We forbid any religion other than the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith from being practiced in public. We desire that offenders be punished as rebels disobedient of orders. We forbid any gathering to that end, which we declare to be conventicle, illegal, and seditious, and subject to the same punishment as would be applicable to the masters who permit it or accept it from their slaves. (Article III)<sup>303</sup>

As an example of the harsh treatment used to enforce this education, Fouchard quoted a Catholic priest and slave owner, Father Labbat, who related how he had punished a slave accused of sorcery. The slave had to endure 300 lashes with a whip, after which he was washed with a hot pepper sauce.<sup>304</sup>

The material and social development of the colony was completely dependent upon the slaves' education in skilled trades. At first, these trades were practised only by French *engagés*,<sup>305</sup> but, eventually, it became more efficient to teach the trades to talented slaves. From his research of colonial newspaper advertisements in which slaves were offered for sale, Fouchard presented a list of skilled trades: blacksmith, tailor, confectioner, butcher, veterinarian, physician, nurse, and midwife.<sup>306</sup> As the advertisements also included listings of the slaves' musical talents, it may be assumed that artistic skills were valued as well.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Retrieved June 14, 2007 from <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335>

<sup>304</sup> Fouchard, *Les marrons de la liberté*. 1988b, p. 112

<sup>305</sup> French artisans, whose passage was sponsored by colonial masters and who had to work for their beneficiary for a certain number of years before they had paid their debts and thus were free to develop their own business in the colony.

<sup>306</sup> Fouchard, pp. 47-49

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-58

The slave offered in the following advertisement was educated in both practical and artistic skills:

*A vendre: un nègre créole, 34 ans, bon cuisinier, boulanger et chasseur, sait parfaitement jouer du violon. S'adresser à M. Subra, rue de la Pointe (A.C. 8 mai 1769) [For sale: One Creole negro, 34 years old, good cook, baker and hunter, knows perfectly how to play the violin].*<sup>308</sup>

The slaves' resulting proficiency in the medical professions was ultimately construed to be a threat, and, in 1764, led to the prohibition of the practise of medicine and surgery by slaves and free people of color; the production and distribution of medicine was prohibited as well. The practise of these necessary skills could hardly be stopped, however, and continued clandestinely.<sup>309</sup>

With the exception of a quote from Louis E. Elie who made reference to a law against schooling slaves, Fouchard could not find evidence for such legal regulation. Nevertheless, from all of the sources that he consulted, he concluded that basic instruction was considered dangerous and incompatible with slavery, and that, for the most part, permission to learn to read and write was denied to the slaves.<sup>310</sup> Yet, Fouchard also related the exception to the rule: In Cap Français (now Cap Haïtien), a female religious order from Bordeaux (France), *Les Filles de Notre-Dame*, opened an educational institution for girls. Their plan to open classes for slave girls was forbidden by the city's colonial society. However, in 1774, when a squadron of British ships anchored in the unsecured bay of Cap Français, the supervisor of the nuns, *Mère de Colomba*, promised God's help to the imperilled white colonists if they would vow to allow the classes for slave girls. After the vow was made, a big storm descended upon and destroyed the British ships, and the plan for the education of slave girls was realized.<sup>311</sup>

Apart from this divinely established slave education in one northern monastery, there were also slaves who secretly learned to read and write. Fouchard remarked that the circumstances that allowed this learning to take place had not yet been revealed. From the examples of those slaves who were able to read and write, it appeared that there was some kind of clandestine transmission of alphabetic knowledge. Toussaint Louverture was introduced to writing by his godfather. Since literacy was perceived as a distinction of the colonial masters, its mastery probably held a strong fascination for the slaves. Fouchard also speculated that a cruel initiation

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<sup>308</sup> My translation of Fouchard, p. 56

<sup>309</sup> Fouchard, p. 49-51

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 60-66

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 67-69

into deciphering letters may have occurred when owners' initials or names were branded upon the slaves' chests.<sup>312</sup>

In 1764, a tailor of Cap Français published the following advertisement in *La Gazette de St-Domingue*:

*Un nègre créole nommé Alexandre âgé de 25 à 26 ans, d'une grande taille, bien fait, ayant une cicatrice au front, perruquier et étampé Jacquemin et au-dessous au Cap, est marron depuis le 28 mai: ceux qui en auront connaissance sont priés de le faire arrêter sans avoir égard au billet dont il se trouverait muni, attendu que sachant écrire, il aurait pu le faire lui-même et d'en donner avis au sieur Jacquemin, tailleur d'habits au Cap, à qui le nègre appartient...*<sup>313</sup>

[A Creole Negro named Alexandre, 25 to 26 years old, tall and well built, has a scar on his forehead, wigmaker, stamped 'Jacquemin' and underneath, 'au Cap' (short form of Cap Français), has been fugitive since May 28: those who see him are asked to have him arrested regardless of any authorisations he may have as he knows how to write and could have written these himself, and give a note to Mr. Jacquemin, tailor living in Cap Français, the owner of the Negro ...]<sup>314</sup>

The colored people were in a more advantaged position since many colonial masters gave privileges to the children resulting from their own relations with female slaves. These mulatto children<sup>315</sup> were allowed to be educated - some of them in France. As they were also given land and freedom, a new class, the *affranchis* (free colored people) emerged. As explained in 4.2, they played an important role in the Haitian revolution. Different from the Black Code in Louisiana which prohibited marriage and sexual relations between persons of European and African ancestry, the *Code noir* provided the following regulation:

Free men who shall have one or more children during concubinage with their slaves, together with their masters who accepted it, shall each be fined two thousand pounds of sugar. If they are the masters of the slave who produced said children, we desire, in addition to the fine, that the slave and the children be removed and that she and they be sent to work at the hospital, never to gain their freedom. We do not expect however for the present article to be applied when the man was

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<sup>312</sup> Fouchard, pp. 83-87

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 86

<sup>314</sup> My translation

<sup>315</sup> Catholicism and the fact that the colonial masters often had their families in France apparently contributed to a more humane attitude toward these illegitimate children as opposed to the U.S. where puritan morality suppressed any open admission of interracial relations.

not married to another person during his concubinage with this slave, who he should then marry according to the accepted rites of the Church. In this way she shall then be freed, the children becoming free and legitimate ... (Article IX)

## Maroon Education

For the most part, there are no written records of maroon education. From descriptions of runaway slaves in newspaper advertisements, Fouchard inferred that most of these maroons were from Congo.<sup>316</sup> Some maroons were caught and punished severely in order to discourage other slaves from running away. Others hid in the mountains, living from what they could plant and harvest there, but also formed bands that raided plantations or held up travellers. The *Code noir* provided the following punishments for maroons:

The fugitive slave who has been on the run for one month from the day his master reported him to the police, shall have his ears cut off and shall be branded with a *fleur de lys* on one shoulder. If he commits the same infraction for another month, again counting from the day he is reported, he shall have his hamstring cut and be branded with a *fleur de lys* on the other shoulder. The third time, he shall be put to death. (Article XXXVIII)

Their lives were defined by the fact that they were on the run. However, they enjoyed more self-determination than the slaves on the plantations, and they had more freedom to practice their native African religious rituals and adapt them to their new situation. Maroon education was based on African religion and passed on through oral tradition. There was no holy scripture; the magic of the words and the common experience of Vodou ceremonies were central to the formation of the maroons' religious, cultural, linguistic and psychological identity. The seed of liberation developed in these communities.

## 6.2 The First Century after the Independence

After the country's independence, the development of a national school system was marked by the same weakness and instability that plagued the Haitian state and by the interests of the upper class. At the same time, there was a tendency to produce progressive educational resolutions on paper. Even before independence, Toussaint Louverture set up a constitution for the colony in which the right of every citizen to establish a school was laid down. These schools were to be supervised by the respective municipal administration.

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<sup>316</sup> Fouchard, (1988b), pp. 158-174

As early as 1816, in the constitution of the southern part of Haiti, Petion established the state's duty to provide free public primary schooling. In response to this ideal principle, the accomplishments of his government in the building of schools were quite modest (8 primary schools, 1 secondary school, and 1 school for girls). The northern part of Haiti was governed by King Henri I who preferred the English education system over the French and invited teachers of the British Foreign School to train his teachers; he established 7 primary schools and 1 secondary school.

Petion's successor, Boyer, unified the northern and southern part of Haiti. He expelled the Spanish from the eastern part of the island and closed all its schools in order to adapt the language of instruction from Spanish to French. He even closed the University of Santo Domingo - the oldest university in the New World. In the Haitian territory, several schools were transformed into military barracks while others were neglected. Boyer's relationship to education was defined by political necessities. He rewarded military and civil patriots with free access to schooling for their children,<sup>317</sup> yet, concerning rural education, he was of the opinion that "*semmer l'instruction c'est semer la révolution*"<sup>318</sup> [to sow education is to sow the revolution]. In Port-au-Prince, he founded an academy that included a medical school and a law school.<sup>319</sup>

In 1843, Boyer was overthrown, and the eastern part of the island became Spanish again. His successor founded the first Ministry of Education, and the state's duty to supply free public primary schooling was embodied in the constitution of 1848 (this time for both north and south Haiti). Nevertheless, there was only slow progress; the ten urban schools that existed in 1843 increased to forty-five in 1860 and to about two hundred in 1895.<sup>320</sup> Beginning in 1824, several Protestant missions were established in Haiti (African Methodists, Baptists, English Wesleyans, and Episcopalists) that built schools in different parts of the country.<sup>321</sup>

President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard who came into power in 1859 made limited efforts to develop higher education (the medical school and the law school were revived); at the same time, urban basic education was expanded. When he ratified the Concordat with the Vatican in 1860, the door was opened for the Catholic Church to take charge of the development of Haitian education. Just a few years later, the first two Catholic schools were founded, both of which continue, even today, to be among the most respected private schools in the country: *Saint Louis de*

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<sup>317</sup> Brutus, *Instruction Publique en Haïti* [Public Education in Haiti]. p. 97

<sup>318</sup> Pierre, *Éducation et enjeux socio-économiques* [Education and Socio-economic Objectives]. 1995, p. 15

<sup>319</sup> Brutus, p. 92

<sup>320</sup> Fass, p. 236

<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 237

*Gonzague* for boys and *Sainte Rose de Lima* for girls. In a supplement to the Concordat of 1862, some of the Catholic schools became non-secular public schools financed jointly by the Haitian state and the Vatican.<sup>322</sup> Thus, the French-Catholic influence on Haitian education increased during the rest of the century.

Although the children of the elite continued to be well educated, the constant lack of funds and the frequent personnel changes (47 different education ministers between 1844 and 1900) greatly hindered the progress of the Ministry of Education toward achieving a coherent national educational policy. A law from 1874 that mandated compulsory primary instruction--free of charge--revealed that the politicians were aware of their responsibility, but the reality was far removed from this ideal. Toward the end of the century, only 15% of the school-aged population were enrolled and, except for a few Protestant schools, Haitian primary education was under French-Catholic control. The language of instruction was French and the curriculum was based upon the one used in France. Education was provided for the children of the elite and the schools were concentrated in Port-au-Prince and a few other cities.

The informal education in the countryside that Herskovits<sup>323</sup> observed during his stay in Mirebalais<sup>324</sup> in 1934 had most likely been taking place in a similar fashion since the country's independence. Herskovits described how the whole family (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, older brothers and sisters, as well as cousins) made sure that a child learned how to behave:

It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed.<sup>325</sup>

He further explained how "the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume."<sup>326</sup> According to Herskovits, the boys began by observing their fathers and helping them with small tasks until they were trained to cultivate a garden at about fifteen years of age. Little girls were gradually introduced to the techniques of selling in

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<sup>322</sup> Fass, p. 237

<sup>323</sup> Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, 1937.

<sup>324</sup> A town in central Haiti, 35 miles north of Port-au-Prince. Herskovits pointed out the contrasting qualities of the "geographical nearness" and the "psychological distance" to the capital as he remarked "... the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation" (p. 4).

<sup>325</sup> Herskovits, p. 100

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 101

the market. Their mothers also taught them how to sew, cook, wash and iron.

Religious education to prepare for First Communion was only attended when a family could afford the expenses for Communion, the result of which was that some classes of candidates included adults.<sup>327</sup> Herskovits also observed that children were sent to work in the homes of other families. He explained that, in Mirebalais, this tradition was "regarded as a token of friendship,"<sup>328</sup> even though tales of the abuse of these children, especially in Port-au-Prince, were circulated. Herskovits concluded his chapter "Birth, Childhood, and Adolescence" with this passage about social and cultural learning:

In the matter of attitudes toward other members of the family and toward the ancestral spirits, as well as in their relations to the saints of the Church and the gods of the *vodun* cult, they are also prepared having in the latter case learned to sing and dance, and, if young men, to play the drums that sound the rhythms of the *vodun* rites. It is at this point in their lives, then, that these young people as adults take their proper places in their society, establishing their own families and carrying on the tradition of their people.<sup>329</sup>

### **6.3 Consolidation of Foreign Influences in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

At the turn of the century, new ideas for the development of a Haitian education system emerged. An educational paper, the *Revue de l'instruction publique*, was founded, and a group of Haitian educators formed the first Port-au-Prince teachers association<sup>330</sup> in 1894. A conference that was organized by the association soon afterwards inspired hundreds of participants. The speakers advocated a critical reflection about the state of Haitian public education and the necessity to work toward better schools for all Haitian children--rich and poor, urban and rural--alike. In these years a heated debate about the usefulness of the educational orientation toward France occupied a number of Haitian intellectuals.

In 1904, Jean Price-Mars, a young intellectual who had studied in Paris, was sent by President Nord Alexis as the Haitian representative to the Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition in St Louis. Price-Mars used this

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<sup>327</sup> Herskovits, p. 101

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 103

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 104

<sup>330</sup> *Association des membres du corps enseignant de Port-au-Prince*, Tardieu, p. 145



trip to visit the Tuskegee Institute,<sup>331</sup> founded by Booker T. Washington whom he had met in Paris during the previous year. After observing the educational activities of the institute for two weeks, he was convinced that Haiti needed a similar educational program to teach technical skills in trade and agriculture to the Haitian peasants.<sup>332</sup>

When, soon afterward, Price-Mars was appointed school inspector in the north of Haiti, he found the public schools in a deplorable state: "incompetent principals, unqualified teachers, mediocre teaching methods, irregular student and teacher attendance, a parsimonious schedule of classes, and archaic buildings with little or no modern equipment." He then suggested that the government contract with the Catholic Church for additional educational services. In 1913, President Oreste did enter into such a contract with the Catholic Church for the establishment of rural primary schools financed by the Haitian state.<sup>333</sup>

However, the country plunged into political unrest, which served as an opportunity for the United States to invade. During the occupation (1915-1934), the Americans established several technical and agricultural schools in the countryside and a teacher-training institute for agricultural teachers at Damien (near Port-au-Prince). These vocational schools were placed under the administration of the Ministry of Agriculture. The American-school concept for these schools was modelled upon the Tuskegee Institute. Since the Americans provided only the organisation of the agricultural schools, leaving the financial responsibility to the Haitian government, there were few remaining funds for any other educational projects. Simon Fass commented upon this allocation of funds saying, "The price of vocational training was strangulation of resources devoted to all other public schools."<sup>334</sup>

On a literary and cultural level, mulatto and black intellectuals attempted to establish a unique Haitian identity, the result of which was that, for the first time, part of the elite identified with the cultural heritage of its African past.<sup>335</sup> One central figure of this movement of *Négritude* was Jean Price-Mars who encouraged literary production that reflected the unique Haitian

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<sup>331</sup> It was established in the 1880s in the southern US for the education of the newly emancipated African Americans.

<sup>332</sup> Shannon, *Jean Price-Mars, the Haitian Elite and the American Occupation, 1915-1935*. 1996, pp. 19-20

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 24

<sup>334</sup> Fass, p. 240

<sup>335</sup> A forerunner of this new self-awareness, Anténor Firmin, had published an anthropological treatise about the equality of the human races in 1885 (*De l'égalité des races humaines: Anthropologie positive*). Lewis (2004) locates Firmin's achievements within a Caribbean movement of pre-*négritude* (pp. 319-320).

way of life. In a series of speeches published in his first book<sup>336</sup>, he advocated social justice and the responsibility of the Haitian elite for the stark social contrasts in the country. He criticized the exploitive tax system and described the elite and the masses as forming "two nations within the nation, having each its own interests, its own tendencies, and its own ends."<sup>337</sup> At the same time, he advocated that both the elite and the masses should cooperate to end the US occupation of their country.

With his ethnological studies published in *Ainsi parla l'oncle* [So Spoke the Uncle] in 1928, Price-Mars gained national and international recognition.

Though Price-Mars did not coin the word *Négritude*, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Léon Damas of French Guinea, and Aimé Césaire of Martinique have all considered him to be the father of the movement, which was concerned primarily with the development of a more positive self-concept among Negroes.<sup>338</sup>

In evaluating his influence on the Haitian society, Shannon comes to the following conclusion:

As a scholar, orator, and nationalist, the dark-colored Price-Mars inspired the divisive light-skinned elite gradually to endorse a united Haitian Opposition to the dictatorial and racist policies of the American Occupation, but was unable to convince the majority of them of the desperate need for educational opportunities for the Haitian masses as one step toward economic stability and of the preservation of a democratic rather than a dictatorial form of government.<sup>339</sup>

Toward the end of the American occupation, two Haitians who had profited from American stipends and graduated from Teachers' College at Columbia University were made supervisors of the Department of Rural Education: Maurice Dartigue<sup>340</sup> and André Liautaud. They were responsible for vocational schools and all other schools in the countryside. When they assessed the state of the rural schools, the data collected brought to light a lamentable situation. Many inspectors, directors and teachers, while accepting remuneration for their job positions, had neglected the inherent responsibilities; some used the school houses as homes for their families and taught in the yards, and others had hired unqualified substitutes to do their work. Dartigue professionalized rural education by instituting competitive exams as a basis upon which to hire teachers, arranging for

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<sup>336</sup> Price-Mars, *La Vocation de l'Élite* [The Mission of the Elite]. 2001 (1919)

<sup>337</sup> As quoted in Shannon, p. 43

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 177

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 176

<sup>340</sup> The information in this section is taken from Dartigue, Esther. *An Outstanding Haitian, Maurice Dartigue*. 1994

the repair and repainting of school houses, adapting teaching programs, and adding agricultural instruction. To improve the teachers' job skills, Dartigue instituted summer courses at the Normal School at Damien. In 1931, Dartigue and Liautaud compiled, printed and distributed a textbook on local geography which, for the first time, facilitated the teaching of Haitian geography before the children learned French geography.

After the Americans left the country in 1934, Dartigue continued to be responsible for rural education. He was further challenged to manage an increasing number of schools on a decreasing budget. Under president Lescot, Dartigue became the minister of public instruction and initiated a thoroughly planned educational reform. It included a reorganization of the services of inspection, an inventory of the qualifications of all public teachers and a subsequent testing of those who did not have any certificates. Those who could not pass the simple test were dismissed; those who did pass received training and better salaries. Dartigue advocated a pedagogy of active and diversified experiences in schools, which he considered important in the development of a child.

Tardieu wrote about Dartigue:

Maurice Dartigue accomplished in the course of ten years as director of education for the non-urban schools much more than any other for Haitian education. Dartigue's performance contains a mixture of three points from which emerge the educational policy. Dartigue thought out a coherent philosophy of education in general, a philosophy that guided his actions. He was a competent technician, who had a scientific approach to reality, and no action was envisioned, let alone initiated, without a preliminary survey or investigation. Finally Dartigue showed himself a tested administrator of high integrity, a manager without peer as concerns human and material resources.<sup>341</sup>

Dartigue was convinced that the US school system was superior to that of the French. However, most members of the traditional Haitian elite were biased in favor of the French system and did not agree with his ideas. The peasantry had their own reasons<sup>342</sup> to distrust anything that came from the US.<sup>343</sup> Dartigue's efforts were curbed from all sides; he represented the

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<sup>341</sup> As quoted (and translated) in Dartigue, p. 36.

<sup>342</sup> E.g., the U.S. suppression of the rebellion against expropriation and forced labor on the roads and the anti-Vodou campaigns of the US backed presidents Vincent and Lescot (see 4.3). More examples of hardships imposed on Haitian peasants in connection with the Haitian-American Development Company (established in 1941) are described in Dupuy (1989), pp. 145-146.

<sup>343</sup> When Herskovits explained the different celebrations and holidays in Mirebalais he mentioned that "two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the 'Festival of the Second Independence', the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is

reform ideas of the United States which provoked resistance from both the urban and rural populations. The overthrow of president Lescot in 1946 brought an end to Dartigue's influence on Haitian education, and, like Lescot, he was forced to leave the country. More attempts at reform were to follow: "Recurrent failure of efforts at curriculum and language reform, at improvements in teacher quality, and upgrading facilities and equipment were to accompany education throughout the century."<sup>344</sup> Fass connected the continuous failure of educational reforms to the country's political organization. The failure of the reformers had nothing to do with any "irrelevancy in their suggestions", those who advocated reforms should rather have stepped "beyond the relatively narrow boundaries of the teaching profession to look at the broader set of meanings, attaching themselves to education... ."

Had they done so, they might not have advanced their causes any further than they did but they might have developed a clearer sense that what they were trying to reform was not the education system but a vital element of the structure of Haitian social and economic organization.<sup>345</sup>

The *Negritude* had its effect on politics; after Lescot, Dumarsais Estimé, a black president, came into power. He started an ambitious reform program that included more access to schooling for black children, although primarily for those living in Port-au-Prince. Light skin lost importance as a criterion for access to schooling. Both urban and rural education were once more placed under the control of the Education Ministry and both again followed the classical curriculum. Access to schooling continued to improve under President Paul Eugène Magloire (1950-1956) and François Duvalier (1957-1971). Families of the rural middle class left their villages and migrated to Port-au-Prince to benefit from new opportunities.

François Duvalier organized the rural schools again under the Ministry of Agriculture, however he did not promote any special program for rural schools nor did he build more schools in the countryside. Nevertheless, for children whose families were part of his *macoute*-network<sup>346</sup>, he provided access to public schools. These families were also able to place the children of relatives living in the countryside into urban public schools. For those who were not in favor of Duvalier's regime, the changes proved to be intolerable. In the view of many intellectuals, the economic and social opportunities deteriorated because of Duvalier's arbitrary rule. Many qualified teachers left the country; others were arrested. The public

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marked by the 'illumination' of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church." (p. 11)

<sup>344</sup> Fass, p. 239

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 240

<sup>346</sup> See explanations in 4.2

schools and the small private schools tried to manage more students with fewer resources which resulted in a poorer quality of education. The only schools able to continuously maintain a high standard were the private elite schools.<sup>347</sup>

As Duvalier forced the elite schools to provide more access to the black middle class, the schools of average standing were opened to the black children of poorer families. Migration and the subsequent financial support of a family member working in the US or Canada enabled the families to pay their children's school fees. When rural families received such support, they sent their children to relatives in the city in order to attend school there. This practice exclusively promoted the development of urban schools, some of which were merely businesses posing as schools without providing much education. The losers of this phenomenon were--once again--the peasants. Although they were the ones who financed the urban public schools by paying the export tax on their agricultural products, it was their children who filled the low quality urban private schools and who would ultimately fail the central test given at the end of primary school.

Commenting upon the state of rural education, Holly<sup>348</sup> reproached the Haitian governments with the following observations:

Inspite of numerous speeches, political or otherwise, there never was a patriotic enthusiasm or a strong will to do anything seriously for the welfare of the peasants. Moreover, painful though this may be, it appears as though there was a positive unwillingness to educate the rural people and to raise their standard of living. The farmers were always considered as a means to produce wealth for the nation, but their personal and private interests, as for individuals and as a class, were never unselfishly considered.<sup>349</sup>

Holly also criticized past governments for their "lack of vision, lack of perseverance and consistency, and a bureaucratic spirit." He observed:

The various reports which come out every month speak of the educational efforts but they do not concern themselves with the results. They lack what in economics is called statistic and quality control, a control which is extremely important for the very life and efficiency of any business, firm, or other institution. ... Paper and ink are used for the most insignificant facts, multiplied ad infinitum, and the report-writing has replaced the spirit of success and of concrete achievement.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Tardieu, p. 176

<sup>348</sup> Holly, Agriculture in Haiti: With Special Reference to Rural Economy and Agricultural Education. 1955

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 217

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 219-222

Leyburn determined the roots of this attitude to be located in the self-interest of the elite: "If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class."<sup>351</sup> The Duvaliers' concern for the masses never approached that point.<sup>352</sup>

When Jean-Claude Duvalier became president, he organized all schools under the Ministry of Education again. He continued to give the children of *macoute*-officers preferential access to public schools. Beyond that, he did not exercise much control over educational matters. The private schools and international organizations had the freedom to develop school projects as they liked, as long as they did not mind that part of their investments disappeared into the pockets of a regime with no interest in educational and social development.<sup>353</sup>

#### **6.4 Dramatic Rise in Primary School Enrolment**

Under presidents Vincent, Lescot and Estimé, the annual growth rate of enrolment in primary schooling was an average of 1.7 percent; under Magloire, primary school enrolment rose dramatically and continued to rise, although more slowly, under François Duvalier. In the public sector, urban enrolment expanded at average annual rates of 6.5 percent (1950-1955), 4.4 percent (1955-1961), and 4.1 percent (1961-1967). The development of private schools was even more dramatic until François Duvalier began to put pressure on them in the 1960s. Expansion of enrolment picked up again after Jean-Claude Duvalier took over the presidency in 1971. His unconcealed interest in receiving international educational investments provided funding for additional expansion of public and private education. His policy yielded a steady increase in the private-enrolment percentage which, in the capital during 1976, was at nearly 60%.

Fass investigated the reasons for this increase which had occurred in spite of the fact that the cost of private schooling was more than twice that of public schooling. He observed that openings in public schools filled as soon as they became available. As these openings were scarce, an industry for acquiring a place in a public school had developed. From his informants, he learned that between \$10 and \$20 could be paid to secure a position for one child in a public school - a sum that would be recovered within a year or so by not paying the tuition charged by a private school.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Leyburn as quoted in Holly p. 218

<sup>352</sup> For an assessment of Haitian primary education until the 1970s see also Viélot (1975).

<sup>353</sup> Nevertheless, in official decrees, equal educational chances, as well as a school system reflecting the Haitian culture were proclaimed (see Duvalier, 1982).

<sup>354</sup> Fass, p. 250

One motivating factor for enrolment was the belief that children who went to school had more opportunities to find work afterward. Moreover, basic education was a precondition for emigration to the US or Canada, and the support of a family member working abroad could raise the income of the Haitian family considerably. Yet, the required uniform, shoes, entrance fees, and monthly fees combined to form a significant obligation to be fulfilled by the families. In addition to all of this, the time that children spent being schooled was no longer available to be spent helping with the work that needed to be done at home.<sup>355</sup>

Another powerful incentive for parents to send their children to school was the establishment of school canteens (cafeterias) and sponsorship programs. The best case scenario for low income families was one in which parents bore no costs at all for sending their children to school. This was achieved if the children qualified for free meals; at times, the family even received a small income. Securing a spot in a sponsorship program or in a school with a canteen was only possible through mediators who charged a "fee" for their service. The Haitian primary student population served by US feeding programs increased from 35% in 1976, to 65% in 1986.<sup>356</sup>

All of these factors created a high demand for education. Since the government neither supplied enough public schools nor set up strict standards for the establishment of private schools, an uncontrolled growth of private institutions occurred. With slight exaggeration, Fass observed:

Most of the transfer through sponsorship programs accrued primarily to self-styled teachers or schoolmasters who in many instances were not engaged in education. Often they were administrators of feeding and/or evangelical programs. Here education was a gloss that made use of resources much less cost-effective than it could have been.<sup>357</sup>

In a footnote, Fass added, "This is not to suggest that feeding or evangelization were inappropriate. The pertinent issue was whether uniforms, books, teachers, bribes, and so forth were really necessary where the purpose of the activity was eating or praying."<sup>358</sup>

Ostensibly, the statistics showing the capital's increase in enrolment suggested exceptional progress, but underlying these figures remained the fact that the content of the education needed closer scrutiny and the provision of schooling for rural children was still inadequate. Fass commented on the capital's educational status in 1986:

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<sup>355</sup> Fass, p. 252-253

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 255

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 257

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 276

One thing was clear. By 1986 the share of school-age population of Port-au-Prince sitting in buildings called schools was larger than in most other cities with comparable per capita incomes. Pétion could not have imagined the process by which primary schooling would eventually become free, and the producers of the Constitution of 1874 could not have imagined the circumstances under which schooling would become compulsory, but Haiti was never closer to their dreams than in 1986. Quantity of urban schooling was no longer pertinent. What needed attention was the quality of that which happened in schools.<sup>359</sup>

## 6.5 Attempts to Reform the System

At the end of the 1970s, representatives of UNESCO and the World Bank, along with reformers in the Ministry of Education, started a reform program for basic education. The main features of this program were: establishing Creole as the language of instruction in the first four grades, and the introduction of French as a foreign language that would gradually become the language of instruction in the higher grades. According to child-centered pedagogic methods, the student was supposed to participate more actively in the acquisition of knowledge; practical and creative learning was to become part of the newly developed curricula. To implement the reform, training sessions for teachers, directors, pedagogical advisors and inspectors were planned. An additional project focused upon the adaptation of the curricula in the teacher-training schools (*Ecoles Normales*) to the content of the reform.<sup>360</sup>

When the implementation of the reform system began in 1982, it became the subject of an intense debate centered mainly upon the mandate that Creole be used as a language of instruction. Wealthy and poor people alike believed that "mastery of French was the only demonstrated road to progress, and Creole, historically, led nowhere."<sup>361</sup> Many educators and parents thought that this reform would split the school system in two, and that the resulting educational gap between elite schools and all the other schools would become even more insurmountable. In fact, the private elite schools were determined to continue instruction in French, as their directors were convinced that this best served the children of the wealthy. The changes also drew criticism because neither the directors and teachers nor the parents were included in the process of planning the reform.

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<sup>359</sup> Fass, p. 259

<sup>360</sup> *Departement de l'Education Nationale: La Reforme Educative: Elément d'Information* [The Educational Reform: An Element of Information]. 1982

<sup>361</sup> Fass, p. 263



In spite of the ongoing debates, the Bernard Reform<sup>362</sup> was officially adopted for the whole country by a national decree promulgated in March 1989. The new curricula for the Formal Basic School (*Ecole Fondamentale*) were declared official. The central tests taken at the end of primary school, that had been eliminated in 1980, were to be re-instituted once the first cohort went through the new system. This standardised testing served as powerful leverage in making the reform programs obligatory. Resistance came from all sides. Dr. Georges Michel, who criticized the reform on behalf of the elite schools,<sup>363</sup> spoke of an educational dictatorship<sup>364</sup> and advocated instead--moderation, tolerance and wisdom, and the right of each school to choose a language of instruction. At the same time, he spoke against "leveling of education" which meant the lowering of standards in the elite schools.<sup>365</sup>

Upon witnessing the resistance from elite schools, most parents could not imagine that the educational reform would have a positive impact upon their own children's educational opportunities. These misgivings on the part of parents influenced the directors of less prestigious private schools who depended financially upon the number of children that they could enrol. Additionally, there was no real political will within the government to insist upon one reformed school system for all Haitian children. This lack of direction was due in part to political instability and the frequent change of Education Ministers. Furthermore, an absence of teacher training in the reform program content, a lack of competent supervision, and a shortage of books and other supporting materials hindered the implementation of the reform.<sup>366</sup>

Alternatives to meeting the terms of the reform program were negotiated in a number of ways. The elite schools continued to use French as the language of instruction, but began to teach Creole as a subject. The test at the end of primary school was adapted to the reform program, but could be taken in either French or Creole, except for the subjects of the French and Creole languages themselves. Hadjadj (UNESCO) remarked optimistically:

Today there is practically not a single school in the Republic that does not apply the new programmes, even if only partially. The system has

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<sup>362</sup> Named after Joseph C. Bernard, who was Minister of Education when the reform was designed and launched.

<sup>363</sup> Michel, *Lettre à Lucien Montas: à propos de la réforme éducative* [Letter to Lucien Montas: On the Occasion of the Educational Reform]. 1990

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>366</sup> Hadjadj, "Education for All in Haiti Over the Last 20 years: Assessment and Perspectives." UNESCO, 2000, 2.1.4

entered into a process of educational change that should continue with the democratic transformation of the Haitian State.<sup>367</sup>

After the Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990, a National Plan for Education and Training<sup>368</sup> (*Plan National d'Éducation et de Formation*--PNEF) was developed in Haiti that was intended to improve the quality of education, expand the provision of education, and improve efficiency and governance. Hadjadj (UNESCO) observed that different from the inertia and discontinuity that characterized the implementation of the Bernard Reform, the PNEF was received with enthusiasm from all sides, though constraints were imposed "due to Parliament's non-ratification of significant international financing."<sup>369</sup>

## 6.6 Language and Education

Historically, the only language of instruction in Haitian schools was French, except in northern Haiti during the reign of King Henry I, who engaged British teachers, who taught in English. As the language of administration and instruction, French became an instrument of power and a means of social distinction by which the elite justified its domination of the Creole-speaking masses. The mastery of French was and continues to be considered a symbol of the civilized world, unlike Creole which was and often is still associated with illiteracy, poverty and a lack of refinement. These concepts were reinforced through the school system. Generations of peasant children had to cope with an unknown language from their very first day of school and, eventually, most abandoned to continue with school.<sup>370</sup> On the other hand, generations of elite children were punished if they used Creole at an inappropriate time. For the elite and masses alike, Creole has always been the language of casual, familiar communication in which the emotions of tenderness or of anger, jokes, proverbs, folk tales, and songs have found expression.

As early as 1937, a Haitian linguist, Jules Faine, attempted to prove that Creole had all the required characteristics to be considered an independent

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<sup>367</sup> Hadjadj, 2.1.4

<sup>368</sup> Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports (1998)

<sup>369</sup> Hadjadj, 2.1.4

<sup>370</sup> In *Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti* (1979) Lundahl remarked in this context, "Reserving the privilege of schooling for urban elite groups (or at least upper class groups) and creating a system which breeds educational failure among the peasant children is presumably an efficient way of dominating the peasants. Ignorant peasants are less likely to question the existing order than educated farmers." (p. 497)

language,<sup>371</sup> in contrast to the general assumption that it was a French patois (dialect). He defined it as follows:

*Une lante néo-romane issue de la langue d'oïl en passant par les anciens dialects normand, picard, angevin, poitevin, et composée en outre de mots empruntés à l'anglais et à l'espagnol et, dans un faible mesure, à l'indien caraïbe et à des idiomes africains.*<sup>372</sup>

[A neo-Roman language issued from the French language, passing by the ancient Normand, Picard, Angevin, and Poitevin dialects and among others composed of words borrowed from English, Spanish, and to a lesser degree of Caribbean Indian and African idioms.]<sup>373</sup>

Subsequently, a standard written form of Creole had to be determined. Different Creole spelling systems had developed since the 1940s and were used primarily in alphabetisation and adult education programs.<sup>374</sup> An official phonemic system was finally legalized in 1979. Unconstrained by the laissez-faire policy of Jean-Claude Duvalier, a host of internationally funded alphabetisation programs in Creole were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. A leading role was taken by the Catholic Church that had been fully Haitianized under François Duvalier. Freirean conscientization and liberation theology were added to many literacy programs and much of the anti-Jean-Claude-Duvalier propaganda was written in Creole. The written form of the language of the Haitian masses attained new importance.<sup>375</sup>

After Duvalier was ousted, the constitution of 1987 recognized Creole as the first language of the Republic:

*Sèl lang ki simante tout Ayisyen ansanm, se lang kreyòl. Kreyòl ak franse, se lang ofisyèl repiblik d Ayity. (Chapit 1, Nimewo 5)*<sup>376</sup>

[All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic. (Title I, Article 5)]<sup>377</sup>

In February 1991, Jean Bertrand Aristide was the first president who used Creole when he was sworn in. With the gradual acceptance of the

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<sup>371</sup> Fleischmann, Das Französisch-Kreolische in der Karibik: Zur Funktion von Sprache im sozialen und geographischen Raum. 1986, p. 126

<sup>372</sup> Faine, as cited in Fleischmann, p. 61

<sup>373</sup> my translation

<sup>374</sup> Valdman related the socio-linguistic background for this endeavor(1989).

<sup>375</sup> Fass, p. 260

<sup>376</sup> Retrieved December 18, 2007 from [www.haiti.org/konstitisyonayiti.html](http://www.haiti.org/konstitisyonayiti.html)

<sup>377</sup> Retrieved December 18, 2007 from [www.haiti.org/constitu/constabl.htm](http://www.haiti.org/constitu/constabl.htm)

education reform, Creole is finally being allowed a place in the schools-- another step toward its liberation and appreciation.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> For detailed discussions of the Haitian language issue, see Déjean (2001), Jean-François (2006), Latortue (1993), Lofficial (1979), Luxana (1997), and Pompilus (1985).

## 7 Haitian Education in the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The following description of the present education system in Haiti is based primarily upon these publications: the national report on the country's educational development by the Haitian Ministry of Education,<sup>379</sup> a World Bank report about basic education in Haiti,<sup>380</sup> the UNESCO résumé by Hadjadj regarding the progress toward Education for All in Haiti,<sup>381</sup> and the analysis of the relationship between the education system and social inequalities in Haiti by Joint.<sup>382</sup> These publications will be quoted in this chapter as Ministry of Education, World Bank, Hadjadj, and Joint.

### 7.1 Characteristics and Structure of Haiti's Education System

The basic features of Haiti's present school landscape have evolved from the various stages of the education system over time and can be described as follows:

- Although the current constitution (enacted in 1987) prescribes universal access to primary education--free of charge, the Haitian government is not able to establish enough schools to serve all children between 6 and 11 years of age. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2003, net enrolment for this age group was 70% and, for the secondary level, it was close to 20%.<sup>383</sup> Of the children on the primary level, 76% attended a private school, which required parents to pay tuition; on the secondary level, the percentage of enrolment in private schools was even higher. The genders were almost equally represented in the primary school population, with a slightly larger amount of boys.<sup>384</sup> Poverty is the factor most likely to prevent children from going to school. In spite of their great appreciation for education, many impoverished parents cannot afford to pay for the tuition, uniform and books for all of their children. In rural areas, the long distances to school and the necessity of the children's help in maintaining the household and farming the fields are often insurmountable obstacles. Moreover, in rural and disadvantaged urban

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<sup>379</sup> *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports (MENJS). "Le développement de l'éducation: Rapport national d'Haïti"* [The Development of Education: National Report of Haiti]. 2004

<sup>380</sup> *Banque mondiale. "Éducation Fondamentale en Haïti"* [World Bank. "Basic Education in Haiti"]. 2003

<sup>381</sup> Hadjadj, UNESCO, 2000, (Quotations from this document are referred to by the respective paragraph.)

<sup>382</sup> Joint, *Système éducatif et inégalités sociales en Haïti: Le cas des écoles catholiques* [The Education System and Social Inequalities in Haiti: The Case of the Catholic Schools]. 2006

<sup>383</sup> Ministry of Education, p. 2

<sup>384</sup> Hadjadj, 3.5

areas, most households rely on the children to fetch the water needed for drinking, cooking and washing.

- Given that about 85% of the children attend private schools (financed mostly by their parents) and the remaining 15% go to public schools, Haiti's school system is unique in the world. While the state invests an average of 15% of its budget (which equals 2% of the GDP) into education, the families invest at least the same amount<sup>385</sup>--often with the help of family members that have emigrated to the US or Canada. Additional financing for both public and private schools has been obtained through various NGOs and the projects of different governments (e.g. US, Canada, and the European Union). Because there are such a limited number of public schools, Ministry of Education reform programs cannot easily be implanted into the education system, especially when most parents tend to support the traditional system.
- The private schools have not developed as a complement to the public schools; rather, they are a reaction to the neglect of the state and have filled the gap. Thus, the market has been open to uncontrolled development. In terms of quality, private schools comprise both the best and the worst schools in the country; public schools are of relatively good quality. While access to the elite private schools requires having the funds to pay a high tuition and proficiency in French, the public schools--which charge only minimal fees--are scarce; the remaining private schools vary in quality and are chosen based upon what tuition can be afforded. Low fees are reflected in substandard school buildings and sanitary conditions, a lack of equipment, and the insufficient education of many teachers; often these schools are not licensed to operate by the Ministry of Education. Late entry, early drop-out, frequent grade level repetition, and a high rate of official test failure contribute to the inefficiency of the school system.
- Since the early 1980s, a reform of the traditional, French-oriented education system has been in progress. In the 1990s, it was expanded to a National Education Plan (PNEF). The implementation of these reforms met with resistance from private schools for which adaptations had to be devised. A critical factor in this process has been Haiti's linguistic situation, in which French, spoken by an elite minority, has socially dominated Creole, spoken by every Haitian. The reform provided that Creole be the language of instruction on the primary level, in contradiction to the wishes of most Creole-speaking parents who believed that their children must become proficient in French in order to move upward socially. The national central tests, taken after 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> grades, are among the most effective devices

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<sup>385</sup> World Bank, p. 42

employed by the Ministry of Education to elicit cooperation with the reform program.

- Most Haitian teachers are young (50% are under 30 years of age) and have little experience (47% have worked in the profession for less than five years). The teachers of the elite schools are adequately remunerated and the public school teachers receive a modest salary; the majority of private school teachers are underpaid. Of all the primary teachers, only 47% of the public sector and 8% of the private sector hold teaching diplomas; about 25% of all teachers have attained an education level less than or equal to the ninth grade.<sup>386</sup> Because of the low salaries, the teaching profession is not very highly esteemed and is often used only as a temporary job while searching for or being educated for a better paid profession. Many teachers work at several different schools concurrently or must engage in non-academic ventures to meet the needs of their families.

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<sup>386</sup> Hadjadj, 3.9

## Structure of the Reformed System

Based on the current reformed system, there are 9 years of basic schooling arranged as follows: The first cycle includes grades 1 through 4, the second includes grades 5 and 6, and the third includes grades 7, 8 and 9. After 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students can either continue by receiving a classical education in order to qualify for university studies, or proceed to a technical or vocational school.

### Organizational Structure<sup>387</sup>

#### CENTRAL EXAMINATIONS

<b>Traditional Secondary School</b>	<b>Technical Secondary School</b>	<b>Vocational School</b>
4 years	3 years	3 years

#### CENTRAL TESTS and ORIENTATION

9 <sup>th</sup> grade 8 <sup>th</sup> grade 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	<b>Third cycle general</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> grade 8 <sup>th</sup> grade 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	<b>Third cycle technical</b>
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#### CENTRAL TESTS and ORIENTATION

6 <sup>th</sup> grade 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	<b>Second cycle</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> grade 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade 1 <sup>st</sup> grade	<b>First cycle</b>

#### PRESCHOOL

Official centralized tests are held at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and after the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (*bac I* or *rhéto*) and 13<sup>th</sup> grade (*bac II* or *philo*) at the end of the classical education.

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<sup>387</sup> Hadjadj, 2.1.5



## 7.2 Demand, Supply, and Selection

The belief that pre-school is necessary in order to adequately prepare for entrance to primary school has led to a high demand for pre-school institutions. Various sources provide inconsistent data on pre-school enrolment. The report from the Education Ministry, states that there was an increase in the gross enrolment ratio for pre-school from 19.7% in 1990 to 45% in 2000<sup>388</sup>. The UNESCO study mentions a 1% net enrolment for 1980, a 6% net enrolment for 1990 and a 63% gross enrolment in 1997.<sup>389</sup> The high gross rates imply that there is a large percentage of over-aged children in pre-school.<sup>390</sup> Of all the pre-school institutions, 80% are private compared to 20%<sup>391</sup> that are public; in most of these institutions, basic pre-learning and developmental activities are not introduced but supplanted by a concentration on literacy in French. Since the Ministry of Education exercises no control over the private institutions, Hadjadj comes to the following conclusion:

The needs in the field of early childhood care and preschool education are enormous, because it is children who are the most affected by poverty and its consequences: malnutrition, shortage, abuse, abandonment, illness, an elevated mortality rate, and so forth. In summary, a truly national policy in favour of preschool-aged children has yet to be developed.<sup>392</sup>

According to the Ministry of Education, the net enrolment rate for primary schooling in 2003 (with respect to the population aged 6-11 years) was about 70%.<sup>393</sup> The UNESCO report stated a net enrolment ratio for primary schooling of 67% in 2000, and stated that year's net ratio for 6 year old children to be only 47.5%.<sup>394</sup> This indicates that a large percentage of children are entering late into primary school. More evidence of delay is revealed by a comparative study of the primary completion rates and "on-time" completion rates of 14 countries.<sup>395</sup> From all countries,<sup>396</sup> only Haiti

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<sup>388</sup> Ministry of Education, p. 18

<sup>389</sup> Hadjadj, 2.3.1 and 2.3.2

<sup>390</sup> The logic behind this situation is a firm belief in French as a means of upward social mobility. Many parents try to make up for the "taint" of speaking only Creole at home by putting their children in a pre-school institution that introduces French so that they will be accepted into a primary school that instructs in French.

<sup>391</sup> Hadjadj, 2.3.1

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 2.3.2

<sup>393</sup> Ministry of Education, p. 19

<sup>394</sup> Hadjadj, 3.4

<sup>395</sup> Cameron, "Primary Completion Rates." Education Policy and Data Center, Technical Paper WP-09-01, 2005.

and the Dominican Republic had a high completion rate together with a low “on-time” completion rate.<sup>397</sup> The UNESCO report stated that 48% of the Haitian primary school children were 3 or more years behind the typical primary school student of 6 to 11 years and that 29% of the Haitian primary school students in all six grades were 14 years of age and older. Grade repetition and failure of the central tests contributed to the fact that in Haiti, an average of nearly 14 years of teaching was required to produce one student who graduated from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This constituted an immense waste of the extremely limited resources allocated to education.<sup>398</sup> At the same time over-aged children are a special challenge for the teachers as it is difficult to integrate older children. Furthermore there is a lack of schools providing professional and technical training for over-aged children leaving school after 4<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>399</sup>

Although Haiti’s primary enrolment is the lowest in the Americas, it is by no means an indication of parental lack of interest in the children’s education. Impoverished parents make tremendous sacrifices to pay for the schooling of their children; while the state’s input of 2% of the GDP into education was comparatively small<sup>400</sup> the family contributions comprised nearly two thirds of the total costs for schooling. This phenomenon is found in no other country in the world. For the poorest 20% of the population, the cost of schooling their children represented more than half of their annual income, a sum that could otherwise be invested in the development of their economic situation.

The greatest injustice is dealt to the families who have worked hard and sacrificed greatly to pay school fees because they believe in the promise of a financially sound future to be provided to them by their children through a “good” education. In return for their investment, they receive only the outcome of a low quality school--an education lacking in the fundamental skills necessary to pass the central tests--and so the vicious cycle of poverty and oppression continues. In fact, the system is very selective--only one third of the children that enter 1<sup>st</sup> grade continue their education

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<sup>396</sup> Armenia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Haiti, Nicaragua, Kenya, Nepal, Zambia, Uganda, Benin, Mali, Ethiopia

<sup>397</sup> For the other countries included in the study the tendency was: “the older the graduating cohort, the lower the completion rate.”

<sup>398</sup> Hadjadj, 3.7

<sup>399</sup> A detailed research about over-aged children in Haiti can be found in: François, *Avoir 16 ans à l’école primaire: Les surâgés dans le système éducatif haïtien* [At the Age of 16 in Primary School: The Over-aged in the Haitian Education System]. 2004

<sup>400</sup> According to the World Bank report (p. 42) the percentage of public expenditure on education as percentage of GDP in Bolivia and Gambia were 5%, in Kenya 7%, and in Namibia 9% in 1999/00.

into the third cycle after having successfully completed primary school.<sup>401</sup> Net enrolment in the secondary level for the year 2003 was rated by the Ministry of Education at close to 20%.<sup>402</sup>

In 2006, the high-school graduation test, *rhéto* (taken after 12<sup>th</sup> grade), was passed by 24.71% of the students to whom it was administered; *philo* (after 13<sup>th</sup> grade) was passed by 66.89%.<sup>403</sup> Only those students who pass the first test are eligible to take the second. This year (2007), close to 1 million children and young adults took the different tests after 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> grades, for which the government paid 205 million Gourdes (US\$ 5 million).<sup>404</sup>

Over the last few decades, the increased demand for secondary schooling has resulted in a larger supply of secondary schools and in the creation of afternoon secondary school programs, by private and public schools, in addition to existing morning programs. Several of the Catholic elite schools offer afternoon programs at a lower price for students who cannot afford their regular fees.<sup>405</sup> When the afternoon programs fees or the costs of living in the city are still too expensive, secondary students can “conveniently” combine their own education in an afternoon program with a morning teaching job in a primary school.<sup>406</sup>

All of the state institutions of higher education are part of the *Université d'État d'Haïti* (UEH, Haitian State University). The high-school diploma, awarded after passing the *philo*, allows access to a university. University studies last from 3 to 5 years, depending upon the field of study; upon completion, a *license* (Bachelor's degree) can be obtained. Some university departments also offer a *maîtrise* (Master's degree) program. In addition, there are a number of private universities. The number of students in higher education doubled from 1986 to 2000 to a total of about 20,000 students.<sup>407</sup> While the Education Ministry's Department for Research and Higher Education is concerned about maintaining unified standards for Haiti's different universities and institutes of higher education, Professor Yves Dorestal, of UEH's Ethnological Department, declared in a conference on Haiti's higher education that the Haitian university “has not yet been

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<sup>401</sup> Hadjadj, 3.8

<sup>402</sup> Ministry of Education, p. 2

<sup>403</sup> *Le Nouvelliste*, August 7, 2006, *Examens d'État: publication des résultats: 24.71% en rhéto et 66.89% en philo* [Results of the National Examinations: 24.71% passed *rhéto* and 66.89% passed *philo*]

<sup>404</sup> *Le Nouvelliste*, June 8, 2007, *Près d'un million de candidats* [Nearly a Million Candidates]

<sup>405</sup> Joint, p. 456

<sup>406</sup> For examples of the strenuous daily routines of primary teachers who at the same time, work on the completion of their secondary schooling, see 10.2

<sup>407</sup> Ministry of Education, pp. 10, 19

born.”<sup>408</sup> He advocated a reform of the Haitian university system that included decentralization and democratization; at the same time, he promoted the implementation of legal regulations for the private universities and a central legal body for the state university as an indispensable part of the reform.

### 7.3 Unequal Opportunities

At present, the Haitian schools mirror the class-based social system by giving unequal opportunities to the children of different social strata. Those who are poor and cannot afford to pay school fees, or who can only afford the least expensive schools, are discriminated against by the selective system. If children from poor families are able to receive an education, it is most likely of an inferior quality and will not provide the proficiency necessary to finish primary school. Aside from poverty, a family's proximity to a town or city influences how likely a child will be educated. Children who live in remote villages typically start school late (if at all) in an institution of low quality. Only 43% of the rural schools offer all six grades of primary school as compared to 66% in urban areas.<sup>409</sup>

One aspect of primary level access that reflects only a slight disproportion is that related to gender. Of all students on primary level, 48% are female. There is, however, a gender-related disparity in the typical age at which school is started: Although 47.5% of all 6-year old children begin school, 51.8% of all 6-year old boys begin school and 43.0% of all 6-year old girls begin school.<sup>410</sup> The gender disparity within the general student population increases on the secondary and university levels.

Another factor used to grant preferential access to education is the ability to converse in French. The Bernard Reform's resolution to remove this language barrier by instituting Creole as the language of instruction during the first years of schooling and to introduce French as a second language, met with resistance from all sides. While the public schools have submitted to this new language policy, many private schools continue to use French as the language of instruction and introduce Creole as a subject--a concession to the reform. The socio-linguistic reasons for this resistance are explained in 7.4.

Children of all social classes are served by private schools in which there is a wide variation of educational quality. Access is regulated via tuition and a few other instruments of selection. Based upon his research in Port-au-Prince, Joint separated private schools into four different categories

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<sup>408</sup> *Le Nouvelliste*, May 17, 2007. "L'université: un triste tableau." [The University: The Picture of Misery]

<sup>409</sup> Hadjadj, 3.10

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.5

determined by the magnitude of the required fees, the magnitude of the teacher salaries, and by special characteristics.

- The international schools are the most expensive (1500-2000<sup>411</sup> *Gourdes* per month), their teachers are well paid (125-150 *Gourdes* per hour) and highly qualified, and they use a French or North American curriculum, according to modern pedagogic standards.
- The traditional Catholic elite schools charge 300-450 *Gourdes* per month and pay the teachers 60-96 *Gourdes* per hour. The teachers are well educated, the pedagogical structures and didactic materials are adequate, supervision is regular.
- Independent schools charge 300-450 *Gourdes* per month and pay the teachers 40-60 *Gourdes* per hour. The teachers have a more or less average level of education; pedagogical structures are more or less adequate and supervision is more or less regular.
- "Borlette" schools (explanation follows) charge 150-300 *Gourdes* per month and the teachers earn 20-40 *Gourdes* per hour. The teachers are poorly educated and the schools lack pedagogical structures and didactic materials.<sup>412</sup>

In response to the influx of disadvantaged children into those Catholic schools that have become more accessible, some parents from elite families have chosen to place their children in one of the very expensive international schools. These schools are completely separate from the Haitian school system and make use of French or American curricula, including the respective requirements for graduation. These children will later study abroad.

Nevertheless, the two oldest Catholic elite schools, Saint-Louis de Gonzague<sup>413</sup> for boys and Sainte Rose de Lima for girls, are still valued by the elite for their first-class education. The primary section of Saint-Louis de Gonzague, for example, is located in its traditional buildings in downtown Port-au-Prince and, since 1973, its secondary section has been located on a 13-hectare (32-acre) parcel (that includes an Olympic-sized swimming pool and tennis courts) at Delmas, a northern suburb of Port-au-Prince. Acceptance into this school is achieved only by passing an elimination entrance test before the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of primary school; the parents must be able to pay the tuition, and the child must possess certain

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<sup>411</sup> From my own observations, the international schools charge between US\$ 100 and US\$ 500 per month which would be about 4,000 to 20,000 *Gourdes* (exchange rate as of July 2007).

<sup>412</sup> Joint, p. 200

<sup>413</sup> Founded in 1865, it was the first school in Haiti, in 1890, to offer primary and secondary instruction. Today, Saint-Louis has 15 schools in all parts of Haiti, of which, 11 offer only primary courses, 3 offer courses through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and the school in Port-au-Prince/Delmas includes all grades. (From a booklet published by the school: *Cent Ans à Saint-Louis de Gonzague: 1890-1990*)

skills including the ability to converse in French. The result of the high demand for a place in this school is that only about one third of the children that take the test are accepted. The other Catholic elite schools are not as exclusive, and transferring from one to another is not difficult, although each uses its own criteria in selecting from applicants (e.g. academic excellence, recommendation, and social position). In spite of this exclusivity, efforts to promote social change have been made. Some of the elite schools have begun to add afternoon programs for disadvantaged students.

The education offered by independent schools is of less quality than that of the Catholic schools. These schools only pay for teachers of average education in spite of charging high fees (especially for the upper grades in secondary school). According to Joint, this larger difference between income and expense can be interpreted to mean that the management's focus is to make a profit, more so than to provide a high quality education.<sup>414</sup>

Of lowest quality are the so-called *écoles borlettes* ("lottery schools"--the chance of receiving an education in one is likened to the chance of winning the lottery). These schools appear to have been established solely for the purpose of economic gain. Hundreds of children are crowded into a few classrooms, "taught" by unqualified teachers, and provided nothing of educational substance with which to pass the central tests. The parents of these children are predominantly illiterate and hope in vain that this school, which is all that they can afford, will provide their children with a better education than was given to them.

Simon Fass remarked about these schools:

At the limit, facilities that call themselves schools are often no more than income transfer sites. Household expenditures flow through schools into the hands of teachers and school operators, while canteen meals and/or the promise of philanthropic cash grants offered in good will by third parties flow back to students and their families. Salaries, profit, and promises, if these are needed to create and then get teachers and children into facilities, are excellent incentives. But they constitute tremendous waste when nothing else happens in the facilities.<sup>415</sup>

Public schools have well trained teachers and, as they charge only minimal fees, they are in great demand among the poorer families. Joint mentioned, however, that because of a lack of administrative supervision,

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<sup>414</sup> Joint, pp. 196-197

<sup>415</sup> Fass, "The Costs of Schooling: Overview of Findings from the Survey of Household Education Expenditure." 1995, p. 32

they were not very well organized and, at times, instruction suffered from teacher absenteeism. Joint also stated that 80% of the students in the public secondary schools came from poor areas of Port-au-Prince or from the countryside. Given this predominance of disadvantaged children, those families who could afford to place their children in a good private school instead would do so.<sup>416</sup>

By following the reform system, the public schools advocate social change and the acceptance of Creole. However, the slow pace of the textbook revisions in response to the reform and the lack of teacher training with respect to the reform's content have burdened many students with only uncertain prospects. This complication further contributes to the widespread reserve toward the educational reform, the result of which is that the public schools have lost some of their former attraction.

#### **7.4 Education Reform and Reality**

As explained in section 6.5, an extensive reform of the education system had been designed and tested in the 1970s and legalized in the 1980s. In this section, the present status of the reform is considered.

The schools that were bound to fully apply the reform were the public schools, but, even in these, the implementation of the reform has been hindered by many obstacles. The years since the legalization of the reform have been marked by political change and instability, international pressure and financial constraints. The Ministry of Education was not able to provide sufficient pedagogical material and teacher training early enough to support a smooth integration of the reform into the existing system. Furthermore, the plan to add a technical and vocational branch to the formal system has only marginally been put into place.<sup>417</sup>

Joint did not find much evidence to support the claim that the reform would democratize the education system. He asserted that the earlier methods of selection that barred so many from beginning their schooling had really only been transformed into more long-range practices of selectivity: While the broader access to schooling allowed more children the initial opportunity to learn to read and write, under the reform, a process of selection occurred instead at the end of the primary level, and those students able to continue schooling after that process could attempt to move through the next selection process on the secondary level. If successful in passing through all of these reform-based mechanisms of selection, their chances of moving upward socially might be improved.

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<sup>416</sup> Joint, p. 104

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 125

To create a more equitable distribution of opportunities, Joint considered it necessary to integrate the children who were unable to continue formal schooling after 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school into technical and professional branches of schooling. He believed that if vocational alternatives were not provided, these children were more likely to fall back into illiteracy after dropping out of formal school;<sup>418</sup> the effort to school the children for four to six years on the primary level would be wasted. Thus, Joint asserted that a broader access to education would only prove productive if the state could provide diverse options for practical training in addition to those oriented toward classical-educational careers.

The many obvious deficiencies in the reformation of the public schools further account for the Ministry of Education's limited influence on the private schools. The inspectors of the Ministry of Education who were (in theory) responsible for the public as well as private schools in their districts were simply not sufficiently supported or equipped to be able to influence the private schools to implement the reform.<sup>419</sup>

The most criticized aspect of the reform was the directive requiring that the language of instruction be changed. While Education Minister Bernard had sound reasons<sup>420</sup> to speak of the "*non fonctionnalité de l'usage du français comme première langue*,"<sup>421</sup> this concept, according to Joint, had not yet entered the Haitian mentality.<sup>422</sup> The Haitian poor had not yet begun to understand the principle of egalitarianism underlying the reform; rather, they were concerned with their children's socio-economic prospects. Those parents who could afford to do so subsequently took their children out of public schools and placed them into private schools that instructed in French.

According to Joint, the attitude of the Haitians toward French and Creole revealed certain contradictions in Haitian society:<sup>423</sup> Although the French language was regarded as a means to overcome Haiti's geopolitical isolation, it was used by the elite as an instrument of social exclusion within the confines of Haiti's own borders; even though the mastery of French functioned in education as a tool of selectivity that secured the dominance of the elite, this discriminatory process was accepted, even by those Haitians whom it most victimized, because it ostensibly provided

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<sup>418</sup> Joint, p. 122

<sup>419</sup> In the interview with Inspector Fernand, he mentioned that the biggest problem for his team of inspectors in their remote school district was that they did not have any means of transportation (see 8.2).

<sup>420</sup> Rural survival rates in 6 years of primary school were as low as 1.5% for a cohort of children that entered school in 1966 (Joint, p. 115).

<sup>421</sup> Joint, p. 117 ["the use of French as first language does not work"]

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 118

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 129



them with a means of achieving upward social mobility;<sup>424</sup> finally, in spite of the fact that Creole was valued as a language for informal exchanges that united all Haitians, it continued to bear the stigma of inferior social status. Joint described this mentality as a vestige of colonialism and slavery.<sup>425</sup>

Thus, the school system was trapped between the two languages: French was considered the way to higher knowledge but was, in fact, a foreign language for most students; Creole, the mother tongue of most, was not valued and was considered an inappropriate means by which to pass on knowledge.<sup>426</sup> This internalized prejudice, which held French to be far superior to Creole, had been in place throughout Haiti's history and carried such weight that the few years since Creole had become Haiti's official language (1987) could not outweigh it.<sup>427</sup>

Joint also criticized the reform's language concept for not promoting more effective and equalizing practices, but instead passing the low regard for Creole into the higher grades where French would be mandatory. The logic of the reform was to use primary instruction in Creole as a means to better prepare students to learn French and thus to better understand secondary instruction only given in French. Once the student entered secondary school, the bias against Creole and in favour of French was restored. Joint did not see any reasonable argument against the use of both languages, Creole and French, in secondary and higher education. Quite the contrary, he argued that making use of both languages equally could facilitate social integration inside of Haiti as well as with the rest of the outside world.<sup>428</sup>

## **7.5 The Teachers**

The most recent publications that supply data about teachers in Haiti rely upon statistics from the mid to late 1990s; it appears that more recent assessments have not been performed. The World Bank study stated that an increase in the number of primary teachers occurred between 1989-90 and 1997-98, rising from 22,676 to 44,472 teachers, which reflected a 96% growth.<sup>429</sup> Since the percentage of rural teachers also grew from 43% to 57% during the same period, this increase especially reflects a more effective provision of teachers to rural areas (the rural population was assessed at 64% in 1998).

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<sup>424</sup> Joint, p. 139

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 130

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 131

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 144

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 145

<sup>429</sup> World Bank, p. 27

Yet, while the quantity of teachers grew rapidly, the percentage of qualified teachers decreased. In 1996-97, only 47% of the public primary school teachers and less than 5% of the private teachers on primary level held teaching diplomas. Of the private school teachers in rural areas about 20% were only educated on the primary level. Additional disincentives to qualified teachers were the meager salaries and difficult working conditions which made a long-term teaching career hold little attraction; every year, 20% of the graduates of the ENI (teacher-training school) left the profession. Many teachers considered their employment to be transitional--a temporary stop on the way to a better paid job. This mind-set explained the profile of the teacher corps which was characterized by a young age--about 50% were younger than 35 years, and little experience--47% had 5 years or less of teaching experience.<sup>430</sup>

The public teachers are better paid than the private teachers; however, their salary is not always paid on a regular basis. After long strikes in 1997, public teachers received a 50% raise<sup>431</sup> in salary which included an insurance plan. Two years later, new strikes followed as the previous terms of settlement had only partially been fulfilled.<sup>432</sup> The World Bank referred to salary figures of between 2,970 *Gourdes* (US\$ 186) and 3,815 *Gourdes* (US\$ 239)--depending upon teacher qualifications--for 1999.<sup>433</sup> It also indicated that the remuneration of public teachers in Haiti was too high in comparison to those in other countries and that the salaries of private teachers were definitely too low.<sup>434</sup>

In a study conducted by the Organization of Private Schools (FONHEP) in 1996,<sup>435</sup> the private school teachers' monthly salaries varied as follows: up to 500 *Gourdes* (for 51% of the teachers), 500-999 *Gourdes* (for 36% of the teachers), and 2,000 *Gourdes* or more (for 2% of the teachers). During interviews with teachers and directors of primary schools conducted for this research project in 2006 (see section 9.2), the salaries mentioned for primary school teachers varied between 750 *Gourdes* and 4,000 *Gourdes*. The effect of the raise in salaries provided not much more than an adjustment to the higher costs of living and the depreciation of the Gourde. In 1996, the exchange rate for one US\$ equalled between 17 and 20 *Gourdes* and, in 2006, it equalled between 40 and 42 *Gourdes*. An additional disadvantage for private teachers is that their salary is only paid during the 10 months of school.

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<sup>430</sup> Information from World Bank p. 28 and Hadjadj, 3.9

<sup>431</sup> World Bank, p. 36

<sup>432</sup> Joint, p. 162

<sup>433</sup> World Bank, p. 38

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 39

<sup>435</sup> FONHEP. *Principaux tableaux statistiques* [Essential Statistic Tables]. 1996

To compensate for an insufficient salary, many teachers instruct in different schools concurrently by teaching during the morning session in one school and during the afternoon session in another school. Some are even employed as teachers in one school and as directors in another school. Others combine their teaching job with activities such as farming, selling goods or preaching in a church. Those who do not yet have a family of their own often combine the completion of their own secondary studies with teaching in a primary school. In all of these cases, the extensive work load has a detrimental effect on the quality of their instruction.

The initial training of primary school teachers can be acquired either by attending the *Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs* (ENI--Teacher-Training School) or by enrolling in a program offered by one of the private teacher training institutions or by the department of education of one of the private universities.<sup>436</sup> Likewise, the official education for secondary school teachers is acquired at either the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (ENS)<sup>437</sup> or a private university. In order to adapt the training of the basic education teachers (grades 1 through 9) to the curriculum of the reform and to provide additional graduates to enter the teaching profession, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the European Union, is in the process of establishing Centers for Applied Basic Education combined with Centers for Pedagogical Training (EFACAP). Each of these centers operates a model school for basic education, and a teacher-training school. Selected local schools in the neighborhood have a cooperative relationship with the centers as well--their teachers are invited to attend in-service teacher-training sessions, and the students of the teacher-training school are sent out to these local schools for practical experience. Two Canadian educational researchers described the teacher training activities by EFACAP as a successful approach.<sup>438</sup> Yet, they also criticized that the Haitian Ministry of Education had not fulfilled its responsibility of paying the personnel involved in the project. A small article in the Haitian daily paper *Le Nouvelliste* from September 7, 2007 revealed that these difficulties were still in the process of being solved. Under the heading "*Aux personnels d'EFACAP*" ("To the Personnel of EFACAP") the Minister of Education expressed his appreciation for the educators working with EFACAP, thanked them for their patience, and announced that they would soon receive their retarded pay checks.

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<sup>436</sup> A precondition to enter this three-years program is a complete *baccalauréat*, however, some institutions have lower entrance requirements.

<sup>437</sup> Higher Institute for Teacher Training--a part of the Haitian State University

<sup>438</sup> Magny & McKenzie. "*Un projet régional de formation continue des enseignants*" [A Regional In-Service Teacher Training Project]. In Amyot & Hamel (Eds.), *La formation continue des personnels de l'éducation: Mali, Tunisie, Haïti, Guyana*. 2006, pp. 161-180

The various networks of private schools (e.g. the FEPH for the protestant schools, or the CEEC for the Catholic schools) have their own programs of in-service teacher training. Even though many private school teachers are not certified, a great majority of them have gone through in-service teacher training. The Private Schools Association, FONHEP, in cooperation with the American Educational Development Center, conducted a study<sup>439</sup> by observing teachers in 16 different disadvantaged basic education schools in three different locations. Among these teachers, 32% had a teaching certificate and 74% had previously completed an in-service teacher-training program--an indication that the acceptable alternative to pre-service training was in-service training.

Some of these teacher-training programs were of a broad, theoretical nature and required participating teachers to listen for long periods of time. Other programs were directly connected to the operations of local schools and so the content was oriented around practical matters. Some of the teachers that participated in the project in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre were associated with a private school system through which they had received specific training in the planning of lessons based upon a particular pattern. After learning how to structure a lesson, they were required to show their lesson plan to their directors every morning before class. For a number of years, different NGOs have initiated foreign-sponsored teacher-training projects similar to the one described in the following chapter. The introduction of child-centered teaching was on the agenda of most of these programs.

In the above mentioned FONHEP/EDC study, in-class observations of disadvantaged basic education schools revealed overcrowded classes, unbearable heat without ventilation, benches too small in size (especially for the over-aged students), a lack of school material, and students that were tired and hungry. Despite all of these obstacles, teachers and students alike displayed an intense desire to persevere.

For the most part, the teachers that were observed used traditional teaching and learning methods such as: repetition in chorus (mainly in the subjects of French and calculation), recitation of rote learning, in-class correction of homework, use of the blackboard for exercises, writing on and copying from the blackboard, and dictation from texts. To establish discipline, some teachers made use of corporal punishment or required that the errant children kneel upon the ground. Other teachers carried a ruler or whip as an instrument of intimidation or preferred to discipline the children verbally or to send them to the director. These observations of traditional teaching methods prompted speculation as to what degree

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<sup>439</sup> FONHEP-EDC. *Le contexte de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage à l'école fondamentale en Haïti* [The Context of Teaching and Learning in Haitian Basic Education]. 1999

these methods were strategies to cope with the challenging circumstances, and to what degree they reflected cultural traditions.<sup>440</sup>

When the 48 classes in the study were observed for levels of student participation, 9 classes showed very low student participation, 30 classes displayed a medium level of student participation, and the remaining 9 classes had very high student participation.<sup>441</sup> The researchers were able to establish a reverse correlation between students' active participation and the use of disciplinary actions: In those classes that displayed a high level of student participation, acts of student discipline did not often occur and vice versa. The classes in which the teachers had participated in in-service training had more of a tendency toward higher student participation.<sup>442</sup>

When asked to explain their concepts of a "good" student and a "good" school, teachers, directors and parents alike asserted that the responsibility for progressing and achieving success in school belonged solely to each student. The pedagogical ability of the teacher and the conditions at the school were considered less influential.<sup>443</sup> The researchers recommended that more research be conducted on the cognitive development of Haitian children in the light of their cultural surroundings and the values of their society. Regarding the teacher training, the researchers suggested a focus on the quality of the relationships between teachers and students as well as the initiation of a dialogue regarding the utilization and improvement of the teaching methods in the Haitian schools.<sup>444</sup>

The uncontrolled growth of private schools since the 1970s and 1980s has lead to an improvised mix of income generation strategies and traditional concepts of education. In order to raise the quality of schooling, it is necessary to distinguish between traditions with real educational value and practices that serve only to make a profit without regard to their effect upon the children. Some of the tactics used by directors whose primary goal is economic gain are, for instance, the retention of over-aged children in pre-school and the tendency to make children repeat the first grades of primary school solely for the purpose of securing the income from tuition. An example of teachers' profit-oriented thinking is the practice of subcontracting less qualified teachers as instructional substitutes in order to use the time for other business endeavours. The practice of using the more accomplished students to replace the teacher carries a certain ambiguity as the student is being used for the economic benefit of the

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<sup>440</sup> FONHEP-EDC, p. 67

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 35-36

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 43-46

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 68

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 69-70

teacher but also gains experience in the teaching profession and a sense of self-worth. The practice of charging parents additional fees for extra courses in preparation for the annual or central tests is most unreasonable, especially when those children who do not attend the preparatory lessons are subsequently pressured to repeat their grade level.

Michel<sup>445</sup> offers yet another perspective as she reflects upon Haiti's African cultural identity in relation to formal schooling:

A critical study of the Vodou religion might well raise the consciousness of an oppressed people who have been subjugated by a dominant Western culture, with an antithetic individualistic ethos that continues to be valued and reinforced by the formal school system. Clearly, Vodou with its powerful communal message and its effective teaching methods could have a lot to offer that system.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Michel, "Of Worlds Seen and Unseen: The Educational Character of Haitian Vodou." *Comparative Education Review*, 1996, pp. 280-294

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 293

## 8 Teachers in Port-au-Prince

In this chapter, I present impressions and interview summaries that describe the lives of teachers in Port-au-Prince and the circumstances of their training. I begin with observations made during several years of living and teaching in Port-au-Prince. Next, I summarize relevant passages from interviews conducted in Port-au-Prince in 1997, 1998 and in 2001 with teachers, a professor, a school inspector and several officers of the Ministry of Education. Last, pilot interviews that occurred in May 2006 in preparation for interviews that I conducted during the project in July 2006 are described.

### 8.1 Observations

When I started to research the lives of teachers in Haiti, I had lived in Port-au-Prince for 3 years and had already formed many impressions. On several occasions, I visited schools and, more than once, had been surprised by the differences between schools in Haiti and those in Germany. Moreover, this experience enabled me to raise topics of interest during different seminars that I held at Quisqueya University. In this section, I describe observations that I made before consciously beginning to gather material for this research.

#### Surprising Educational Concepts

In 1998, I accompanied a friend in the delivery of a donation of school supplies to a small primary school on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. When we arrived in the schoolyard, the director of the school, who was in the process of teaching, came out to greet us with a big smile. While doing so, he wore a belt around his neck. He was not at all aware of how this “tool of instruction” shocked us. On another occasion, I was similarly appalled when, on my way home, I came across a street vendor who had a big basket full of *fouets* (whips) that he was trying to sell at a busy street corner not far from where we lived.

Another observation occurred when walking to the house of a friend who lived about 10 minutes from our house. I would pass by a small school building that was under construction at the time. At least a hundred children were cramped into a relatively small space. Typically, there was an incredible noise, and it seemed as though the different classes were trying to drown each other out as they repeated their lessons. This time, however, I saw all the schoolchildren lined up in the yard with their hands outstretched in front of them, making no noise at all. A teacher passed by the line of students holding a stick, now and then hitting the hands of a student. I could not tell how he selected his victims or if the hitting was done at random.

Later, when I did an interview with the director of this school, he told me that it contained a primary section with 328 students and 14 teachers, and a secondary section with 34 students and 5 teachers. I also learned that they worked in two shifts (morning and afternoon). As for the language of

instruction, it had been decided to combine the old system (from the beginning the language of instruction was French) with that required by the reform system (in the first years the children learn how to read and write in their Creole mother tongue and Creole is used as language of instruction, French is introduced later as a foreign language). The combination of the traditional and the reform system resulted in the following curriculum: Starting in preschool, the children were taught how to read and write in French. Then, in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, they began reading and writing in Creole. The idea behind the reform--children should start reading and writing in their mother tongue--was turned completely upside down.

He showed me around so that I could see how the interior of the school was arranged. One and a half rooms were used for class space and the remaining half room was used as an office. The full-sized room was divided into four classes, each of which had a blackboard on one of the walls. Benches were lined up in front of the blackboards and met in the middle of the room. The smaller, half-room was arranged for two classes. The children had no tables. The rooms were quite dark, as the windows were only small openings in the walls.

In 1999, a young lady from our neighborhood asked me to visit her kindergarten to observe how they taught children as young as two or three years to write letters. When I arrived, she led me into the room in which the instruction was taking place. About 20 very young children sat on the floor, each with a little piece of rug upon which to sit. They sat, amazingly quiet, and waited for their turn to come up front where two teachers each sat on a chair. One of them had a kindergarten primer<sup>447</sup>, a guideline on how children may learn the letters in a playful way, on her lap. The other had a child on her lap who was given a colored pencil with which to draw the "letter of the day" on top of a big letter in the book. Several children were called up front to do this, and after completing their task, returned to their little rug. Those who did not know how to hold the pencil or were insecure about drawing the letter received help from the teacher who took the child's hand in her own and guided the pencil over the letter. I am not sure how often these young children actually had to go through this procedure, or if perhaps this activity was only done to impress visitors.

### The Seminars at the University

The students in the education department of Quisqueya University were a heterogeneous group of men and women aged between 20 and 40 years old. Between 10% and 20% (depending on the seminar) of the group were nuns and monks. While the nuns were easily recognized by their attire, it took me some time to discern those men who were monks; in fact I only

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<sup>447</sup> Ironically, it was composed by my dean at Quisqueya University's Education Department.



discovered this when they told me themselves. Compared with the nuns who were very sincere and focused, the monks had a cheerful nature and were always ready for a good joke.

One of my favorite lessons was the entry lesson into the seminar "Philosophy of Education." I explained to the students that, according to Socrates, all philosophy started with wonderment. They reflected for five minutes about a situation that had filled them with wonder. Then, each student told the class what had come to their mind. Most of the stories had to do with nature (e.g. the birth of a puppy) and some with people (e.g. a good friendship). There was such an open exchange that it too was really wondrous. In the end, they wanted me to share a moment of wonder as well.

In general, I was surprised at the students' active level of participation in class. On the other hand, their contributions were of a rather spontaneous nature and not necessarily always well-reflected. Sometimes the discussion would become so emotionally charged that I had to intervene and ensure that only one person spoke at a time. One time, a student presented a paper about a project for street children that was a front for the political party of then-President Aristide. She was almost unable to finish her presentation because the class was so swept away by a political debate for and against Aristide. Only after I reminded them that we were not in the market place but in the university did they finally calm down.

In the seminar "*Animation des Groupes Scolaires*,"<sup>448</sup> which dealt with child-centered teaching methods, we once talked about the students' experiences with corporal punishment when they were in primary school. A few students explained how they were made to kneel on a stone floor when they arrived late. Others' hands were whipped, or they were hit with a stick when they had not learned their lesson. Those who were teaching at the same schools that they themselves had attended as children had seen how the practice of corporal punishment had changed there over the years. In fact, in the elite schools, corporal punishment was no longer practiced.<sup>449</sup> For students who taught in disadvantaged schools however, the situation was different. One student said that in the school where she taught, all teachers used a stick, and that the parents insisted upon it. As a result, it had been necessary for her to find an alternative way to deal with this pressure. She admitted that in certain situations, her last resort was to threaten a child by pointing towards the stick, otherwise running the risk of being ridiculed by the kids and losing their respect.

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<sup>448</sup> Working with Students in Groups

<sup>449</sup> Berrouet's explanations about non-violent education reflect the prevailing approach to corporal punishment in present-day Haitian elite schools ("*Pour une éducation sans violence dans la famille, à l'école et dans la société*", 1998 [For a Non-violent Education in the Family, at School and in Society]).

## 8.2 Interviews in Port-au-Prince

Several of the interviews that I conducted in 1997 and 1998 are also pertinent to this research, so I am including a summary of the relevant parts of these interviews in the beginning of this section. After that time, in 2001, I started to conduct interviews with students and faculty of Quisqueya University and the main topics raised in those interviews are presented here. In the last part, I summarize an interview with a school inspector.

### Interviews about Access to Schooling

As explained in section 1.1, the focus of my initial research in Haiti was on access to schooling. The interviews that I did in 1997 and in the beginning of 1998, dealt with this subject and with the topics of school reform and teacher training as well.

During a visit with friends in a remote town, I met the director of the department of social studies in primary education in the Ministry of Education, Monsieur Etienne, who had come in order to train the teachers of that area as part of a nation-wide project. We arranged for a meeting in Port-au-Prince upon completion of the project. In November 1997, I had the opportunity to talk with him and five other people in the ministry who were involved in that project.<sup>450</sup>

After discussing the issue of access to schooling, I asked them about their experiences with the teacher training project that they had just completed. Monsieur Etienne said that about 55% of the teachers remained on a very low educational level but that 45% had a better understanding of what was taught. The training that they had received was directed at their academic and professional development. Most of the teachers had problems concerning the use of the Creole and French languages. When these teachers went to school as children, they did not learn Creole as a written language. Now, as part of the reform program, they had to teach Creole in written form. At the same time their knowledge of French was limited.

Another member of the group said that it would be best to develop in-service teacher training in all schools, but there weren't enough inspectors able to do the training. It would require both a better education and a better salary for the inspectors. Another problem discussed was the lack of materials and books based on the reformed system.

Monsieur Etienne reported that, during their trip to the North of Haiti, they had seen many school buildings in poor condition. Some schools had no

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<sup>450</sup> Detailed notes of this group interview can be found in the appendix of Thiel, 1998 (pp. 126-128).

roofs, so when it rained, there was no school. Other schools did not have benches, and the children had to sit on trunks. Some schools had to put more than one class in a room which created quite a chaotic atmosphere. One of the women present said, "It was bad to see the deteriorated situation of most of the school buildings in the countryside, but even more shocking was the low educational level of the teachers. Many of them were not even able to follow the teacher training."

In December of 1997, I met Professor Yves Joseph of the ethnological faculty of the State University in Port-au-Prince, who also worked as a consultant for the U.S. development organization USAID. Years ago, he had done research on the state of the linguistic environment of Haitian children<sup>451</sup> and had come to the conclusion that most Haitian children had few opportunities to speak and hear French, and that they did not develop proficiency in French by going to school. His solution was that the children should learn the structure of their Creole mother tongue first in order to be able to understand the structure of French. Based on this conviction, he was a strong promoter of starting school in Creole as implemented by the reform program.

In our conversation, he emphasized that educational reform was the most basic element of the solution to the lack of human resources in Haiti within the system of formal schooling. However, he criticized the government for not having enough political will and for not spending enough money on the implementation of the reform. Mr. Joseph also pointed out that for the development of human resources in Haiti to occur, formal schooling was not the only realm to consider. There were two other groups of people: those who had never gone to school, and those who had left school after a few years. Both groups had to be addressed and integrated by non-formal education programs.

### Interviews with Students of Education

About half of the 20 education students that I interviewed in the beginning of 2001 were either primary school teachers or directors, or had worked for teacher training projects on a primary level. Some students had taught on both primary and secondary levels, while others had only taught at secondary schools. From the interviews with those students who had worked exclusively on the secondary level, I included in this summary only their responses to the question about improving teacher training in Haiti because their answers touch the primary level as well.

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<sup>451</sup> Joseph, "*Enquête pilote sur l'environnement linguistique de l'enfant haïtien.*" [Investigation into the Linguistic Environment of the Haitian Child] Paper presented at the '*Symposium sur le créole dans l'enseignement primaire en Haïti*' [Symposium on Creole in Primary Education in Haiti], Port-au-Prince, August 1979

First, I asked all the students some general questions about the schools in which they taught. Then, I inquired about the hiring conditions (what kind of certificate they had to present) and the presence of in-service teacher training in their schools. I also asked them why they had chosen to study education, and if it was difficult to pay the tuition. Furthermore, I wanted to know what they thought needed to change concerning teacher training in Haiti. Their answers are summarized below under three topics.

For most of the students who worked with teacher training projects, *philo*, university studies (though not graduation) and a recommendation from one of their professors were required for employment. One student had to belong to the Baptist faith (as it was a Baptist project) and have at least one year of university education. Another student was hired on the basis of his experience with different projects for children.

The hiring conditions for teachers of primary schools were less demanding. Several teachers were hired by schools in which they were already known. In some cases, it was a school that belonged to a relative. In other cases, it was the school that they had attended themselves. They were hired while they were in the upper grades or after they had finished their education, without any additional requirements. Kika was accepted in a Montessori school as a teacher's aid by recommendation, however the teachers of this school were required to have a Montessori diploma.

Some schools were more stringent in their selection of teachers. Jeff explained, "Either you have to be a qualified teacher or a university student in the field of education. On top of that, you have to prove that you can teach with competence and that you are punctual, reliable and sincere."

Even though a few of the schools employing the students that I interviewed did not practice in-service teacher training, it was established in most schools. Some had teacher training programs every summer, while others had them as many as two or three times a year. Chachou, a nun and director of a primary school, explained that she had been teaching children for ten years but was now primarily supervising other teachers and doing a lot of training. Twice a month, she conducted a training session in which she explained to her teachers what she had learned in lectures and seminars at Quisqueya University. During the summer, she also conducted a one week program with her teachers and sent them to the seminars of *Henry Deschamps*, the largest Haitian publishing house for schoolbooks.

Robert worked as chief trainer of a Baptist teacher training project that oversaw 16 Baptist schools, most located in rural areas. When I asked him about the educational level of the teachers in these schools, he explained, "You know the schools have to find teachers from nearby. That means teachers who live in these remote areas. There, you cannot find well-educated people who could respond well to the responsibility of teaching primary school. The level of their teaching is insufficient." When we talked about the content of the teacher training seminars in this project, Robert

mentioned, "In the seminars, we talk about the subjects and the didactic of teaching the subjects. We are talking about cooperative learning and many other things that are important for schools in the countryside. We consider the context in which the school is situated. We want to provide the teachers with a minimum knowledge so that they can create a learning atmosphere in their class."

Jennifer and Papa Kon worked for a teacher training project that was designed and financed by USAID and carried out in cooperation with different Haitian organizations. Jennifer summarized their teacher training activities by saying, "The training has to be first on the level of classical education. Next, we have to concentrate on the teaching methods for working with the children, and finally, there has to be follow up in the classroom, help for the teachers, giving them the tools they need to overcome the obstacles in their classroom."

Papa Kon commented on the acceptance of the training. He said, "One thing is sure, they want to improve the quality of their teaching; they want to have a new pedagogy--the new techniques that are taught to the teachers--but these changes in behavior cannot be done from one day to the next. Since the teachers have old habits, they need time to change."

The factors that motivated the students to choose to study education ranged from an interest in new methods to the desire to improve the education system or become an educational planner. In several cases, the students grew up in a school environment (e.g., their parents owned a school) that influenced them to take up the study of education, while others were sent by their (Catholic) order to improve their skills.

The ability to pay the tuition varied greatly. There were students for whom it was not a problem because their families were able to pay the tuition. Others were supported by their family but also contributed from their own salary. Some received scholarships, or their studies were financed by their religious order. Others had a difficult time paying the tuition from their salary. Papa Kon explained, "You have to work for two months in order to pay for a semester of four months and to buy the books."

Fritz also had to struggle with the tuition and said, "First I had a scholarship which took care of 50% of my tuition, but that was still a bit difficult for me because I had to pay the other 50% by myself. My family could not afford it. The only way to pay for the fees was to accept work as a teacher. I have to say that the university is a little bit expensive compared to what you earn at work. For me, even the 50% was difficult to come up with, so for those who have to pay the whole fee, it is even more difficult."

Willy had a difficult time as well, saying, "Yes, it is very, very difficult. The university absorbs three quarters of my income. That is quite difficult, but here in Haiti, education is very important for your career so I am obliged to pay for my education and hope to become important in the field of

education and that everything I spend for my education will come back to me."

At the end of every interview, I asked the students for suggestions regarding the improvement of teacher training in Haiti. Those students who were involved in teacher training had a great deal to say. Robert, Jennifer, Epau and Papa Kon stressed the need for better remuneration of teachers. Robert said, "There has to be a rise in salary for the teachers. Many times the teachers are not motivated to make sacrifices. Especially if a teacher has to have other jobs in order to support his family it gets very difficult. A teacher who should be effective cannot have other jobs as well." Robert also suggested the establishment of an ethical code for teachers, as children tend to follow the example of their teachers. Furthermore, he advocated for the development of a more practical curriculum, one in which the children could put the things they have learned into practice one day.

Epau talked about the reform, stating, "I think that the reforms that have been developed were only on a structural level but have not arrived yet in the classroom. Concerning the relationship of teacher and students, the methods of teaching, there is nothing concrete that has changed. There is a new structure for the primary and secondary cycles, but I think the reform has to be much more focused on life in the classroom, the methods of teaching, the way that the lessons are presented, etc."

Jennifer explained, "I work with this project of teacher training, I can see that there are many gaps. The starting point is the classical education. The teachers do not even know the subjects they teach." Beyond the training itself, she emphasized the importance of making sure that the content of the training is put into practice. She added, "Another important thing is the follow up. There are many training sessions, or training months, but afterward, the trainers don't go to the classroom in order to see if the teachers were able to practice what they had learned, and find a way to help the teacher, if there is a problem. Different teachers have to deal with different obstacles, so one has to be in the classroom to see over which obstacles the teacher is stumbling and show him how he can get around these obstacles."

Fritz stressed the general need for teacher training when he said, "The first thing that has to change is the fact that there is no priority given to teacher education. There are only a few schools who give in-service teacher training to their teachers."

Jean believed in continuous education and said, "It is not possible to take out the teachers who have been there a long time but are not competent; then there would be a lack of teachers. Quite the contrary, you have to offer them continuous education and see that they really accept this education and you will see the results if you do this."

Chachou had observed a particular inflexibility with older teachers. She commented, "What I also see is that the older teachers don't want to adopt

new methods. They are used to traditional methods. It is easier for them to dictate to the children and tell them what they have to do, but when they should look for didactic material, prepare the courses, listen to the children, organize them into groups--all that is too much work for them. They prefer to sit behind their desk. This is an enormous difficulty. But there are others who graduated from Normal Schools, who have many gaps and many problems, yet if they get some sort of training, they try to put it into practice and make good progress."

Nana had some suggestions for teacher training in her school and explained, "I think the school in which I teach should have workshops of continuous education for the teachers. One topic should be the manner of teaching French, how to make it more alive. Often the teaching is done in a traditional manner. Another topic should be computer technology. Many teachers have no idea about computers so they should be brought up to date. There should be regular workshops on different topics, different teaching methods – a bit more lively. Often the teacher comes with his prepared course and he talks, the children write, and that's it. There are no groups; there is no pedagogical relation among teacher and students."

Kika, hoping for a change in concepts, pleaded, "I think in Haiti, the concept about children has to change, also the concept of education. In order to work in the field of education, one really has to be interested in it. Many times people think it is a job you can easily get because many schools don't ask for any diplomas. Teachers should really be concerned about the future of the children. Also, the ancient methods have to change. For instance, the corporal punishment has to be abolished and educational methods have to be developed--like what you should do in this or that case."

Guerline concerned about the importance of psychology for teacher training, stressed, "The teachers just teach what they learned at the university. They are not quite conscious that they are teaching children, and that children have certain characteristics. Most of the time, they give a speech and then finish, and they do not see the needs of the children. They have to know that children cannot always listen but also need to be active and also need a quiet time. Furthermore, the Haitian teachers are too strict. For every little misbehavior there is, right away, a punishment. There always has to be silence. They should realize that a child is a human being. Also the teacher should behave as a human being."

Jeff, also deploring the old methods, added, "The system of rote learning and corporal punishment, which is unfortunately still applied in most of the Haitian schools, has to be changed."

Johanne was concerned about the unequal access to schooling. She observed, "The children are taken according to their social class and their capacity to follow a course, but nobody tries to help those who have only little means."

Marie, concerned about the gap between foreign theories and the Haitian reality, said, "I think some courses should be included where the teachers can use their creativity to adapt all the theories from abroad to the reality of the Haitian school."

Anne-Marie was concerned about the gap between teacher training and the teaching reality. She explained, "It is not so much the training of the teachers that we need to change. The teachers who were trained have to put into practice what they learned when they educate young people. The training that the teachers received has to be utilized. It happens often that teachers learn many new methods at the university, but when they arrive in the classroom to really work with the students, they use the old methods or 'whatever' methods, but they don't put into practice what they have learned."

### The Trainer of the Trainers

Professor Reginald Paul had been working for four years with the teacher training project in which Jennifer, Papa Kon and Fritz were involved. In the first year, Professor Paul conducted teacher training sessions at a number of schools in the countryside and wrote up reports for the project directors as a basis for their project planning. In 1999, he became a trainer and supervisor of the trainers. In this capacity, he organized training sessions for the trainers and supervised their seminars with the teachers. Part of the project was directed at the communities and the students' parents who were supposed to be integrated into the schools' administrations. Thus, it was Professor Paul's task to prepare the trainers for their work with the parents as well.

When I interviewed him in October 2001, he described the project's strategy as follows, "It is a strategy of the project to organize the schools in groups in order to give them the service package that the project has developed. It involves training, care, and delivery of material and other things. All this is done to reach the goal of changing the behavior of the participants." Concerning the implementation of the project, he considered the trainers (like Jennifer, Papa Kon or Fritz) the central persons of the project, because they were in direct contact with the schools, they trained the teachers and the directors, and they observed the behavior of the teachers after the training.

Professor Paul worked with six trainers, each of whom oversaw six schools. Each school employed about six teachers. When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the project, he remarked, "At first, let me say that this is a project based on extremely interesting ideas. In a way, these ideas have allowed our teachers to question, a little, their traditional teaching practice, their classical teaching practice. The project criticized this traditional practice and at the same time it offered the teachers an alternative. The alternative is child-centered teaching. The basis of this child-centered teaching allows the teaching to be aimed at the child, and as a consequence, it can help the child to develop socially, to be more open to others, and this will instill in the classroom, after all, a minimum of



democratic culture. It also allows the child to participate, in one way or the other, in the development of knowledge in the classroom. In general, I can say that the positive side of this project is situated in this."

He admitted that one weakness of the project was "that the teachers could not be taken care of in the way they needed, to be able to establish a didactic structure of teaching that would really allow them to practice child-centered teaching." Regarding the conditions in the field, he observed, "The environment of the schools does not always favor the implementation of child-centered teaching. There are, for instance, overcrowded classes. There are classes that do not have much light, and often the aeration is inadequate". ... "It also has to be mentioned that the socio-economic level of the teachers is another obstacle for the realization of child-centered teaching in the classroom." He also spoke of the relationship between teachers and directors saying, "Many times they (the relationships) are not cordial, and that makes the work of our trainers more difficult. Many times the directors do not have the time to supervise the teachers to see if they are effectively putting into practice a child-centered method of teaching, but I also have to say that there are certain directors who are not too interested in that. They are not always interested in making it work."

Professor Paul also noted shortcomings in the curriculum of the project's service package by explaining, "There is an accent on pedagogical content, but there is no accent on the subjects. This is mixed into the general education. We have lectures about the didactic of reading, of maths, of oral expression, but that is not enough, for we found teachers in those schools who did not have a solid initial education. These people would still need basic education, especially in the field of the subjects. If there is a teacher who doesn't know French very well, how can he teach French? If someone doesn't know maths or biology, how can he teach these subjects? The project could not contribute to solve these problems, however, it was designed like that; they wanted to concentrate on the pedagogical side in order to allow the teachers to establish a new pedagogical structure and new pedagogical practices."

When asked what were the most difficult moments during his work on the project, Professor Paul answered, "Certain people, on the managing level, merely saw me as an executive who should do his job, and not as someone who is there to reflect and to find solutions to the problems." He continued, "If I had ideas to share, or wanted to discuss certain questions, this was not always well received. I had the impression that the most important thing was to put into practice what the service package suggested. It was not possible to question the service package."

### The Viewpoint of a School Inspector

Inspector Fernand's family lived in our neighbourhood, and his children and our children were friends. Inspector Fernand spent most of his time in his school district--a remote area near the Dominican border. Because of the distance between his home and work and the poor road conditions, he

could not come home often, and so I was glad to be able to reach him in May 2001 to conduct an interview.

For three years, Mr. Fernand had been a principal inspector and was responsible for a small team of inspectors in his district. For sixteen years before that, he had been an inspector, after being a school director for thirteen years and a teacher for one year. He explained that in his district, he was responsible for the school administration and for teacher training of both public and private schools. As part of the supervision of the schools, teachers who needed training had to be identified, and training sessions had to be organized. This was accomplished on a local level by arranging two week seminars in a certain zone. During this time, the schools that participated in the training were closed. If there was a need for additional training, Inspector Fernand arranged supplementary summer seminars to be given by the Education Ministry.

When I asked Mr. Fernand about the relationship between training and remuneration he clarified that those teachers who worked in public schools had a chance to improve their salary when they reached a certain stage of education. The teachers' salaries, however, as well as the inspectors' salaries, were not at all satisfactory. Inspector Fernand complained, "You do not earn enough to satisfy your needs. For example, in the schools for our children, the school fees have gone up, but the salaries haven't. There is no equilibrium between the income and the expenses. This creates our economic problems."

Mr. Fernand pointed out another problem in his district: instead of six inspectors, there were only three. This had a detrimental effect on their workload as well as on the time spent with their families. When asked how often he was able to visit his family in Port-au-Prince, he replied, "If we were six people I could come (home) every two weeks or every month, but like this, as we are three, the work is much more tiring for the three of us, and we do not have the time to leave so often."

When asked what his biggest problem was, Inspector Fernand mentioned the lack of a means of transportation, saying, "There are numerous problems, but since you asked me for the biggest problem, I would say it is our problem with transportation. In order to do the work of supervision and administration, you need transportation as you have to go to different places, but we have nothing; we have no means of transportation. If there are needs for a school, if they request certain supplies, there is a need to move around and arrange things, but it is not possible. This is our biggest problem."

Upon being asked how he travelled from school to school, he replied, "In our district, we move around in whatever way it is possible. We have no vehicle. We have no transportation money. If we have to go to a place that can be reached by public transport, we will use the public transport and pay the fees they charge. If there is no public transport, we are obliged to go there on the back of a horse or donkey or walk, but if we take a horse, we have to arrange with the owners to borrow it. If that can't be arranged,

we have to walk. That's our problem. If we take a truck and the truck doesn't go exactly to the zone where we want to go, we get off in the middle of the trip and walk the rest. That's hard, that's really hard."

### 8.3 Pilot Interviews

In preparation for the interviews to be given during the summer project in 2006, I asked a Haitian friend, Maurice, who lived in Germany, to conduct pilot interviews for me while he was visiting Port-au-Prince from March to June of 2006. When he came back to Germany in June, I had a conversation with him about his experiences during these interviews.

Before his departure, I had given Maurice an interview guideline to use and asked him to choose four to six teachers from different disadvantaged primary schools. Initially, he found it difficult to find school directors, in that category, who were willing to recommend one of their teachers for an interview. He explained, "At first, I had visited three schools just like this. At the first school, the director was not so enthusiastic about my plan. He rejected it; he wanted to have papers from me, who I am, for what it is, etc. For me, that was like a clear rejection. At another school, the teachers just did not show up. At a third school, they let me wait a long time and it became clear that they were not interested. There was a fourth school where the teacher also did not show up. Four times my request for an interview with a teacher was directly or indirectly turned down. After that, I decided to rely on my personal contacts." This change of strategy affected the resulting sample of schools in that they were not actually in the category of "disadvantaged" but operated on a somewhat better socio-economic level.<sup>452</sup>

Maurice's education is in a technical field so it was a new experience for him to interview his compatriot teachers. He observed, "It was the first time that I talked with teachers about their profession. I was very impressed by their commitment, also by their love for their profession. Not with everyone, but with most of them, I could recognize a love for their profession. For all of them, the teaching vocation emerged at a very young age. Maybe they had wished for something else, but life did not allow them to study something else, and they ended up as a teacher. However--and

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<sup>452</sup> During this time a nationwide scandal concerning fraudulent registration of students from unqualified schools for the national exams provoked strict sanctions from the Ministry of Education and, among school directors, may have created mistrust toward strangers. While many of the disadvantaged schools had no official licence, the ministry emphasized that only those schools with a license were allowed to offer instruction in grades that culminated in the taking of official exams (6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> grades). See article in *Le Nouvelliste*, Mai 31, 2006, "Plus d'une vingtaine d'écoles privées sanctionnées," [More than Twenty Private Schools Sanctioned]

this is very important--this profession did not appear from nowhere. They all are people who liked to give private lessons from an early age, who were asked by the teacher to replace them, who were good at school and who liked to teach when they were young, but since this profession is not the most respected profession in Haiti, of course with such a low salary, it was not their dream job, but it is a profession that they like. The main problem is the money--their salary. It was very interesting for me to understand that they like their profession. Some of them might even be able to get a better paid job, but they put up with the lower salary to stay with this profession. That was my feeling. This made the strongest impression on me."

Introduced as an example of a teacher in challenging circumstances, with a continued love for his job in spite of it all, is Germain, one of Maurice's interview subjects. At the end of his twenties, Germain had been teaching maths and science for two years in primary and secondary schools at the time of his interview. His story begins after his high-school graduation, when he would have preferred to study medicine but was unable to enter the medical educational facility. Instead, he began studies in civil engineering. Though he pursued this goal for four years, he could not afford to continue long enough to graduate.

Afterward, while teaching, he tried to generate additional income from bookkeeping, but found it difficult to find jobs. At the same time, the logistics of his teaching job consumed most of his energy. Each day, it took two hours to travel to his school and two hours to return home. He explained, "The real problems have to do with Haiti's crisis. There are problems with electricity. The area where the school is, is almost completely neglected, and there is a big problem with the streets in that area. My way to school is very exhausting. When I come home from work, I sleep right away. Sometimes I catch a fever on my way, so I get sick from time to time." Germain did not lose himself to self-pity though; he was more concerned about his students. He said, "Some of the children have a very long way to school, and when they arrive at 8 a.m., they are hungry and can't concentrate. Others don't have the books and have to copy from the other students' books. I can see whose parents have financial problems. That's hard (he sighs). My dream is that 100% of the children can pass the exam after 6<sup>th</sup> grade."

A topic that I did not include in the interview guideline--corporal punishment--was raised by another teacher that Maurice spoke with: Fabiola, the only female teacher interviewed. When asked if she had ever participated in an in-service teacher training, she began to describe her most recent training session in which the participants were informed that corporal punishment was illegal. She said, "They told us, for example, that we are not supposed to hit the children or hurt them. We learned that there is a law against it, and the parents could make us pay if we continued to do it (she laughs as if this is completely unreasonable)." Her response to the idea that hitting the children could be considered illegal portrayed her total disagreement with these regulations, and her automatic assumption that Maurice, understanding this absurdity, must be

"on her side." When he asked if she was using the whip, she replied, "Yes, when the children disturb the class (she laughs). I also have the big stick, but those who disturb get the little stick. The big stick is there to threaten them."

When I mentioned to Maurice that I was surprised at how openly she talked about this subject, he said, "I don't think that she is a big, big exception. Her way of speaking was quite drastic--she could have talked more sweetly, but she did not do that. I was impressed by her honesty." At the time, I was about to participate in a teacher training project with a focus on children's rights and alternatives to corporal punishment, and I realized that I should consider Fabiola's reaction whenever this topic was raised. Although she was frank with Maurice, in an official setting she probably would not have said anything like this.

Maurice, explaining his own point of view concluded, "In general, there is a lot of hitting in Haiti, maybe not always real beatings, but to hit with a stick on the hand is very normal. It is so normal that it will be difficult to let it disappear. Maybe there are even other problems which are more pressing than this. I think to threaten children and to show lack of respect towards them may be worse than a few taps on the hand. It depends on how you do it, and what respect and commitment you show towards the child beyond that."

These pilot interviews helped in several ways to develop my interview guideline for the summer project. Difficulty in obtaining comparable basic facts from the pilot interviews influenced me to ask for basic facts in the beginning and then pursue the narrative parts afterward. I also realized the importance of being sensitive toward *how* things are said in addition to *what* is said. Concerning corporal punishment, I came to the conclusion that I would only ask about its use indirectly. For details about the influence of the pilot interviews on the interviews during the summer project, see chapter 3.3.

## 9 A Teacher Training Project in the Province

In July 2006, I had the opportunity to participate in a teacher training project during which the central information for this thesis was collected. In this chapter, I describe in detail the environment in which the Haitian primary school teachers functioned, including the areas in which they lived and worked, and how their work situation was seen by both their directors and the school inspector responsible for their school district. For this purpose, I summarize two group interviews with primary school directors and one expert interview with the school inspector. General information about the teacher training project is also provided, including its focus, program content, development, and Haitian and foreign participants. At the end of this chapter, I offer some representative quotes from my interviews with 10 of the 15 foreign teachers who participated in the project as staff.

### 9.1 The Setting

The remote, coastal community of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre contains approximately 60,000 inhabitants and is spread out over an area of about 39,000km<sup>2</sup>. This includes the town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and surrounding villages, some of which are as far as 40km away from the town. Near the ocean, the terrain is flat; a few kilometers into the interior, there are hills and plateaus up to 1000m high. There are no paved roads, and few vehicles are ever seen. Baie-de-Saint-Pierre has several water sources and public fountains but does not offer public electricity.<sup>453</sup>

The community has about 130 primary schools and 25 secondary schools. As in the rest of Haiti, most of the schools are privately owned. Some of the secondary schools in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre teach through the 9th grade, others through the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grades, and three schools educate students through the 13<sup>th</sup> grade. Some villages have their own secondary schools that educate children through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The Ministry of Education is represented in the area by a team of school inspectors.

As is typical for all remote areas in Haiti, the medical care in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre is highly insufficient. There is one hospital, one clinic, and two health centers without beds. The number of personnel in these medical institutions totals five doctors, six nurses, seventeen auxiliary nurses and four laboratory technicians<sup>454</sup>. All of these institutions are concentrated in

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<sup>453</sup> Sources of data are: Joseph, *Dictionnaire historique et géographique des communes d'Haïti* [Historic and Geographic Dictionary of Haitian Communities] (2003), local informants, and my own observations.

<sup>454</sup> This information from Joseph's dictionary of 2003 may have changed a bit, nevertheless the ratio of physicians per 100,000 people is about a third of the Haitian average.

the town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. The Ministry of Public Health is not represented locally. In the legal realm, Baie-de-Saint-Pierre has a justice of the peace, a police station, and a civil service office. With little public infra-structure, most people feel neglected by the state. Rather, a sense of belonging is created within the 123 church communities of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, most of which practise some form of the Protestant faith. Baie-de-Saint-Pierre has no library, museum, theatre, or cinema. Football is the most popular sport there, and it is played locally in the town's football stadium.

Few people in town can afford to produce their own electricity using a generator. The owner of the house in which we stayed had one, but to save gas, he ran it only one or two hours every evening. We never knew when it would start or when it would stop. As it was necessary to prepare for school each evening, we always had to have matches and an oil lamp nearby. There was no running water in the house, but we were provided with buckets of water in each of the two bathrooms. Most of the time there was enough water for our use. After a few days, our hosts even managed to provide "running" water for us to bathe in, with the help of a container propped up on the roof of the one story house in such a way as to create a makeshift shower.

In spite of this rustic environment signs of global connection could be observed in the occasional ringing of a cell phone (even in class during the project), in the provision of access to the web to those who were able to afford it,<sup>455</sup> and in the loud radio-transmissions of the ongoing World Cup matches that could be heard in the streets.

## **9.2 Working Conditions for Teachers in the Area**

In order to better understand the teaching conditions in the primary schools of this area, I interviewed 16 primary school directors in two group interviews, and the chief school inspector of the Baie-de-Saint-Pierre school district in an individual expert interview.

### **Interviews with the Directors**

At the end of the first week and during the second week of teacher training, we had several sessions with the school directors. These typically occurred in the afternoon since teacher training hours were scheduled in the morning. Topics relating to school management and teacher guidance were discussed in these sessions. After the initial meeting with the directors, I asked if I could conduct a group interview with the primary

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<sup>455</sup> Some of the foreign teachers were offered access to the web by a Catholic priest, others used a public acces offered for a small fee (at least for us) at the edge of the town.

school directors of the town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. The next day I arranged another group interview with those primary school directors who had not yet participated in one. In the first of these group interviews, there were nine directors, and in the second, there were seven. These two groups represented a major part of the primary school directors who participated in the teacher training seminar. All of the directors were male and approximately 25 to 40 years old. I asked each of them how long they had been teaching, how they had become directors, how many students were in their school, what fees the students had to pay, and what salaries their teachers received. At the end of the interviews, I asked them to describe the most significant problems in their schools. We sat in a circle; I asked one question at a time, and the directors answered, one after the next.

The information that the directors gave regarding their teachers' salaries was consistent with what the teachers themselves had said about their salaries. The directors were not asked about their own salaries or incomes because I had the impression that it would have been too difficult for each to talk about their personal finances in front of the other directors. I assumed though, that the directors' salaries were greater than the highest of the teacher salaries mentioned. In the interest of anonymity, I did not ask for the directors' names, and so they are listed by group and number in the following table (1.1 is, for example, the first person of the first group). When referring to the directors' individual careers and problems faced in their schools, they are identified by their number. In Table 2 below, the income from student fees and the expenditure for teacher salaries of each school is compiled. In the first group interview, I neglected to ask the directors about the number of teachers in their schools, therefore this information is represented only for the second group. All of the directors represented private schools with no support from the state.



Table 2: Size of school population, fees for students and salaries of teachers according to two group interviews of 9 and 7 directors (arranged from smallest to largest school)

Group.num-ber	Number of students/ Number of teachers	Fees for students in Gourdes per year	Salaries of teachers in Gourdes per month
1.2	40	1750	750 at most
1.4	50	2250	750 at most
1.1	50	1000	2000-3000
2.4	60/5	700	1250-3000
2.7	70/5	1500	1250-1500
1.5	150	1000	1750
1.7	200	2500	2000-3000
1.8	220	1700	1250-1500
2.1	250/9	2000	2250-3500
2.6	250/10	1250	2250-3250
2.2	300/10	1000	2500-3000
2.3	300/11	1500	2500-4000
2.5	400/12	1800	2500-3500
1.6	400	2000	1500-2500
1.3	450	2000	2000-3000
1.9	450	2250	1750-3000

Every director had previously been a teacher for at least several years (between 3 and 15) before becoming a director. Most of them taught and directed at the same time; a few functioned only as director. When I asked them about the circumstances in which they had become directors, most responded by saying that they had worked hard for many years in one particular school, and when the need of a director arose, they were the natural choice to fill the position. Some had been vice-directors (*censeurs*) who replaced the former director of the school. In one case, the director had been absent from the school for four months, but the *censeur* replacing him did not yet know when or if he would return (1.8). Others

were asked by the school's administration in their home village if they would direct a school (after completing their own education). One of them had studied economics (2.2) and planned a business career, but when his pastor asked if he would direct the church primary school, he dropped his business plans and accepted the position because he wanted to help his community. In one case, a director (1.7) had founded his own school.

When asked about significant problems in their schools, finances were mentioned by nearly all of them. As they were all directors of private schools, their own salaries and those of the teachers, the rental fee for the school building and all other expenses had to be paid from the children's school fees. Some directors (2.3, 2.5, and 2.6) mentioned NGO-support for their schools. Director 2.6 explained that his school was supported by an NGO but that the parents had to contribute their share for their children's schooling. The parents' inability and unwillingness to pay these fees affected the school's ability to function. One director (2.7), who could not afford to pay his teachers well, said, "Almost every day the teachers complain about their low salary. We cannot pay them more because we are not supported. Almost every day we are disturbed because the teachers cannot come every day; they have different activities to feed their wife and children. So we really would like to ask for help." Another director (1.3) said that although he would like to pay his teachers a salary that would motivate them, he was not able to do so.

Another problem mentioned was that of the unsanitary conditions in the schools. Some schools had no toilets at all; others had toilets that were in a bad condition. Several schools had no drinking water nearby and the distance to the nearest water source was unmanageable. The need for a better playground was mentioned a few times, and some directors talked about the need for a library. The director (2.2) that had studied economics said, "The first problem is a problem of documentation. We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we don't have access to a small library, not even to a copy machine."

### Interview with Inspector Hyppolite

When we arrived at the school for the teacher training, we were told that in the next building, the evaluation of the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade tests was in progress. Sixth graders from all the primary schools of the community (which included remote villages as far as 40km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre) had come to town in June to take this standard test. On the afternoon of the fourth day of our project, I went to the building in which the test evaluation was occurring in search of someone who could explain how the issue of which language to use on the test (Creole or French) had been managed, and in particular, whether the students were allowed to take the test in Creole or if they had to take it in French.

When I had discussed the role of Creole in schools in the 1997/1998 interviews with members of the Education Ministry, and also in an interview with Vanya Berrouet, then acting head of FONHEP, an organization of private schools, the issue of language used in teaching was

very confusing. Between the ministry and the elite private schools, there was an intense discussion going on about the school reform. The new emphasis on teaching and speaking Creole in primary school instruction was very controversial. The government had created new curricula to reflect the reform, but had not yet been able to set up revised programs for all grade levels. The elite private schools refused to apply the reform and continued to teach in French, but did add Creole reading and writing lessons.

After asking a teacher in the test evaluation room if she could answer some questions, I was directed to an inspector who asked me to accompany him to the next building. There, he introduced me to the chief school inspector of the entire Baie-de-Saint-Pierre community, Mr. Hyppolite. Suddenly I had the chance to ask many more questions about the status of education in the area. I had brought my tape recorder, but beyond that, I had to improvise the interview. During the entire conversation, the inspector who had introduced me to Mr. Hyppolite stayed with us. The nature of the interview was quite formal. Mr. Hyppolite sat behind his desk, and I sat facing him from the other side. The other inspector stood at a slight distance listening to what was said. At the end of our meeting, the inspector showed me samples of the current year's tests in both French and Creole, and Mr. Hyppolite told him to give me a copy of each test. All the tests, except those which tested Creole and French language skills, could be taken in either French or Creole by choice.

Mr. Hyppolite explained the tests by saying, "There is a national curriculum, which is distributed in all schools of the republic. It is our task as inspectors to assure its application. When the Ministry of National Education needs to evaluate all children, at first, information has to be gathered to know where the children are, at which level the tests have to be applied. Then we ask the directors to verify the tests so that a better equilibrium of these official examinations can be achieved. This is how things are done on the level of conception and planning. Finally, the test that is given is at a medium level. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade test is actually a test for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, which comprises 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There are specialists who work this out on a national level organized by the state, this office is called BUNEXE<sup>456</sup>."

When asked if the tests were exactly the same in all Haitian communities, he answered, "Sometimes things go wrong,<sup>457</sup> so there has to be a bank of tests with different tests. For example, the exams in the north may be identical to the exams in the south, but it can also mean that in the west, there is another test from the bank. There, they have four to five types of

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<sup>456</sup> *Bureau Nationale des Examens d'Etat* [National Office of State Examinations]

<sup>457</sup> He probably referred to past incidents of corruption and fraudulence in connection with the central tests.

text, and if something went wrong, for instance in one department, it can be quickly corrected.”

Regarding the outcome of the test from the Baie-de-Saint-Pierre area being evaluated at that moment, he said that this year, as in recent past years, the children had done better in maths than on the French language skills test. On the issue of French and Creole in Haitian schools Mr. Hyppolite commented, “We have a French culture and the children learn French at school. Except for those from the upper class, the children don’t speak French at home, but learn French in school. This is the vast majority of children. The courses are held in French, it’s a question of adaptation in some way. They need time for that--first, for speaking French, then for writing French. We say it is a foreign language for us--it is a foreign language--but it is an official language so it is used at school, so it is spoken at school. Anyhow, the children adapt themselves because it is an imperative.”

Concerning the topic of teacher training in the community, he mentioned that they meet with the directors of all schools about three times a year and also work with the teachers. The most difficult aspect of their work was finding the means to cover the needs of the schools. “With everything we see and the little we have, we sometimes feel powerless,” Mr. Hyppolite concluded, but then he offered that in such a situation, he considered it important that they have “good will” and “do their work with joy.”

The atmosphere during the interview was friendly but much more official than that of my interview with inspector Fernand in Port-au-Prince in 2001 (see 8.2). Inspector Fernand lived in our neighborhood and the interview had been at his home far from the school district in which he worked. Here, however, I came as a member of a teacher training project in Inspector Hyppolite’s district and we had been in the presence of the other inspector.

### **9.3 Conceptualization and Realization of the Project**

Over the last eight years, the teacher training project was organized during vacation times in different areas of Haiti. It was an experience that inspired Haitian and foreign teachers alike who, while working with the project, were able to develop a broader vision on teaching in different countries and under different circumstances. During the summer project of 2006, this was the overall sentiment of many participants.

#### **How it all Began**

While travelling through Haiti on a UN mission in 1996 and 1997, a Canadian educator of Haitian origin saw the backward conditions of the rural schools and decided to do something about it. He recognized the need for the development of child-centered learning and teaching in these schools. Once back in Canada, he inspired a couple of friends to join him in conducting a teacher training seminar. They set out to challenge a rigid system based on rote learning and fear of corporal punishment by introducing teaching methods that focused on the children’s natural

curiosity and interest in discovering the world. All participants were very inspired, and it became clear that more such seminars had to follow.

From the beginning, the focus of the seminars was to train participants in child-centered, didactic methods and classroom management techniques while maintaining respect for children's rights. This was done by introducing model lessons in the core subjects (maths, science, social studies and French) with the Haitian teachers first experiencing the lessons as students and then developing and presenting individual lesson plans. When the project curriculum was first planned, it became obvious that the level of formal education of Haitian teachers varied widely and it would be necessary to be flexible about the standard of the training. In the following projects, the volunteers were asked to prepare lessons that could be delivered on different levels. In this way, they could adjust their teaching once they were in the field and had come to know the Haitian teachers in their group. The Haitian teachers' experience of "learning with joy" was meant to be the beginning of a different concept about teaching and learning.

During special lectures, the issue of respecting children's rights and sensitivity towards their dignity was raised. At the same time, the use of corporal punishment was discouraged and alternative methods to uphold discipline in the classroom were introduced. All foreign teachers were asked to integrate these concepts into their teaching and into class discussions. There were also lectures about civic responsibility and conflict resolution. Because corporal punishment was quite prevalent in Haitian families, the topic of children's rights was to be addressed in a community gathering at the end of each seminar. Unfortunately, this particular year (2006), the community evening, scheduled in an open plaza, had to be cancelled when it rained heavily.

In the summer of 1998, the first project of this kind took place in a small town in central Haiti. More than 300 Haitian teachers attended the seminar. They became very excited and asked for another seminar project to occur at the end of that year. As it turned out, this was to be good opportunity for all participants, both foreign and Haitian alike, to reflect on the implementation of what they had learned in the summer project. From 1999 on, the project was repeated every summer in a different area of Haiti. Each time there were about 300 Haitian participants and between ten and seventeen foreign volunteers. The American chapter of a church contributed some funding for the first seminars, which made it possible to provide lunch for the participants.

Preparation for the project usually began a year in advance. The project leaders set up contacts in the area, the registration procedure for the

Haitian teachers was established<sup>458</sup>, a teaching site was chosen, and accommodations for the foreign teachers were arranged. The recruitment of the foreign teachers usually started at the beginning of the year. Several had participated in the project for many years, some came just once, and others were inspired to take up other projects in Haiti. The foreign teachers had to pay for their own flights and bring along whatever material they needed for teaching, but accommodations in Haiti were provided for them. In 2004 and 2005, the project had to be cancelled because of the country's difficult security situation. After this break, and in the middle of a not yet stabilized political situation, the organization of the project in 2006 had to be improvised.

### Summer Project 2006

Project 2006 was advertised via North American teachers' unions and on the project's website. Beginning January 2006, volunteers could send in their applications and by May, a team of 15 teachers (12 from North America and 3 from Europe) had been recruited.

Every teacher who volunteered for this project was required to prepare lesson plans and bring along the necessary material for her/his lessons. Since the teachers were organized into teams, those working together made all the necessary plans ahead of time. We were instructed to keep the lessons as simple and concrete as possible and to focus on introducing child-centered teaching methods. During the immediate weeks before the project, a lot of e-mails were sent back and forth determining who would bring what and making suggestions for lesson plans. Since the project was to begin in early July, most of the teachers did not have much time in between the end of their own school schedule and their departure for Haiti, so the preparations were a bit hectic.

Because of the persistently unsecured situation in Haiti, the project had to be moved from the pre-arranged site to a more remote and secure area. Consequently, the registration of the participants, the school facilities for the seminar and the accommodations for the foreign team had to be set up without preparation. This was accomplished with the help of a local contact. Three of the project leaders arrived at the project site a few days early to make sure that everything was ready. The person in charge of making preparations for the project, was found to be a local political figure with a very personal agenda. He had not extended the invitation to all the schools in the area, as had been done in previous years. His own political and religious affiliations seemed to have played a role in the selection of schools.

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<sup>458</sup> The directors of the schools of the project site were invited to join the project and choose three or four of their best teachers so that the experience of the project could be passed on to the other teachers of that school later.

In addition, the house in which he had arranged for the foreign teachers to stay was still under construction and had no furniture yet. Since it was his own property however, from which he would gain the income of renting it out, he insisted that this would be where the teachers would be accommodated. Fortunately, the project leaders managed to find another house which was pleasant and within walking distance of the school where the project was to take place. Because of the tension between the project staff and the local project organizer, I was unable to clarify the selection of teachers with him. In fact, after we chose not to stay in his rental house, there was not much communication between him and the project people at all.

The self-serving nature of the project preparation led to a somewhat confusing situation in the registration of the Haitian participants. Some schools had not received the registration forms, and others had heard about the project over the radio, but were not aware of the registration requirement. The goal that school directors choose three or four of their best qualified teachers to participate in the project in order to pass on what they learned to other teachers in their school was not achieved. Some schools sent many teachers, while others were left out completely. The outcome was that 275 teachers from 58 different schools completed the two week teacher training seminar and received their certificates. Another 5 to 10 teachers attended some classes but did not satisfy the requirements for seminar completion. In order to receive a certificate, teachers were required to attend the entire project and to present a lesson plan based on one of the methods introduced during the project.

The schedule for teacher training was Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The teacher training was separated into seven groups (classes): one pre-school class, four primary school classes (two classes for the first cycle, that is, 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and two classes for the second cycle, that is, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade), and two classes for the first cycle of secondary school (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade). Teaching was done in teams; for instance, in the two groups of the first cycle, two foreign teachers taught maths and science, and two foreign teachers taught French and social studies. As in previous years, there were special lectures about children's rights and methods of class management by the project leaders.

When the Haitian teachers realized that no lunch was to be provided by the project, they became quite upset, and one of the directors came to our house to discuss the problem. A provision for lunch had not been made in advance and since no funds were available, the project leaders were reluctant to enter into the negotiation and management of cooking and distributing a simple lunch. The experiences of past years with the provision of lunch had been difficult. One year, the teachers had even rejected the food and wanted the money allocated for it instead. Nevertheless, it became clear that, for the next year's project, a lunch for all Haitian teachers must be included as part of the project preparation.

In order to demonstrate how the training was done, I will describe two lesson sequences used with the Haitian teachers from the first cycle groups.

The first lesson sequence was entitled, "How to Present a Story and Work with the Text." Mandy, my Canadian team teacher, first asked the class if they had ever told a lie. Some responded with childhood stories, after which, she raised the question as to why it was important to tell the truth. After some commentary, she began to introduce the story, "The Shepherd Boy Who Cried 'Wolf!'" First, she showed a picture and asked the teachers what they thought might happen in the story. After she gathered some ideas, she read the story to the class.

Next, she posted several pictures of important scenes from the story onto the blackboard. She asked three of the teachers to come up front and retell the story by pointing to the pictures. The first teacher had a hard time connecting the story with the pictures. He just pointed to the first picture and told the whole story. The other two teachers were better able to connect the story with the pictures. Then everyone was asked to close their eyes, and the sequence of the pictures was changed. When they opened their eyes again, Mandy asked for volunteers to put the pictures back into the right order.

After this, we talked about the different characters that were part of the story: the boy, his father, the people of the village, the sheep and the wolf. Pictures of the characters were posted on the blackboard. The teachers were asked to form groups of six or seven people in order to practice a theatrical version of the story. The groups went out to find accessories and practiced their plays in different corners of the schoolyard. Then each group performed their play in front of the class. The acting was very creative and animated, and attracted a large audience. With the exception of one group in which the actors attempted to speak only in French (which had kind of a dampening effect on their play), all the groups spoke a mix of French and Creole. Most of the actors were completely absorbed in their roles, as was demonstrated especially when the wolf finally did come, and rushed at the sheep. Every time the story was performed both actors rolled on the dusty floor in spite of the good clothes that they were wearing for the teacher training.

The second lesson sequence, a series of lectures that lasted through an entire morning, was given as a joint project combining maths and social studies. Four foreign teachers and the two classes of Haitian teachers who taught 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, participated in it together. The purpose was to practice measuring and to learn how to draw the floor plan of a house at a reduced scale, as well as to collect information about people in the community. The teachers practiced measuring and drawing the classroom first and then formed groups of four, each of which included a teacher who lived nearby. Their task was to measure a house of their choice (in most cases, that of the teacher who lived nearby) and the rooms inside, and to make notes about it. They also had to note how many people lived in the house, their names, their ages and their jobs. Before leaving for their



assignment, each group received a notepad, a pencil and a measuring tape.

The groups returned quickly with all of the information, and we gave them big sheets of paper on which to draw the floor plan of the house that they had measured. Around the plan, they wrote all the names, ages and jobs of the people who lived in the house. Some teachers drew all the people, while others decorated the garden. Every house looked special. When all the groups were done, the results were presented to the class. The plans were attached to the wall so that their orientation, as it related to the school where the project took place, and the respective distances between them, were accurately represented. In the middle of the wall, a sign was placed that said, "My Community."

This was done on the Friday of the first week. When we came back to school on Monday morning, all of the sheets were lying on the floor. The weekend had been very windy and the windows would not close. We picked the sheets up and gave them to the teachers who had drawn them. Social differences between the teachers became apparent during the presentations of the houses. One group had drawn the house of Selisma, a one-room house. When Selisma presented the findings of his group to the class, other teachers made fun of him for presenting such a small house.

Every day, ten minutes before the end of the training session, all of the teachers were asked to work quietly on their reflections for that day. They were instructed to think about what they had learned that day, or what had come to their mind in connection with the lessons they had just experienced, and to write it down. The next morning, we started the first lesson by asking for a volunteer among the teachers to present her/his reflections from the previous day.

In the second week, each of the Haitian teachers had to create two lesson plans, one in French or social studies, and one in maths or science. One of the plans had to be presented in front of the class. It was required that the lesson plan include strategies that they had learned during the project. Some teachers preferred and were allowed to work in pairs. Some elder teachers, too shy to present a plan by themselves, were happy to work in pairs with younger teachers who were unafraid to speak in front of the class.

One incident that occurred during the presentation of a lesson plan shed light on the relationship between some directors and their teachers. After a young teacher presented a lesson plan that was not well developed, one of the directors sharply criticized his work. Everyone was quiet and this young teacher sat down in dismay as the next teacher began to get up to present his lesson. At this point, we intervened and pointed out the effort that the young teacher had made so that he could be appreciated as everyone else had.

## 9.4 Interviews with Foreign Staff

After the graduation ceremony on the day before we all left, I interviewed eight of the 15 foreign teachers. The next morning, while we were waiting at the airport, I interviewed two more. Some interviews became a catalyst for a profound exchange, others were kept brief. I think that the nature of the discussion depended a lot upon the circumstances but in the end, there was simply not enough time. During the interviews, I asked the teachers about the number of years they had taught, if they had been to Haiti before, and how they had learned about the project. I also asked them about their impression of the Haitian teachers and what special experiences they might have had during the project.

The foreign teachers had been teaching for between 1 and 28 years--an average of 13.9 years. Five had never been to Haiti before, four had been to Haiti once before, and one had been to Haiti often and had extended stays. Six of the teachers had learned about the project via the internet, and four had learned of it through a friend or colleague. Those teachers who had participated in many projects over the years<sup>459</sup> had the impression that this year's staff was the best so far. The comments made by these foreign teachers appreciated this year's team for a deep sense of responsibility toward the goals of the project, a genuine interest in the Haitian culture and a good sense of humor.

### Perceived Characteristics of the Haitian Teachers

All the foreign teachers were impressed by the sincere attitude of the Haitian teachers. Other attributes mentioned were: eager and willing to learn, interested, curious, earnest, enthusiastic, sincere, and hard working; without many resources, they would try their best. Ellen said, "I am just so amazed at how they persevered despite so many obstacles, personal and professional obstacles. In that way, they're very inspiring." Other teachers mentioned the Haitian teachers' good hearts, their positive intent and their will to succeed.

Phyllis reflected, "I think teaching here is a noble profession and I think they hold their heads high and they dress professionally, and they present themselves professionally, and many of them are craving education for themselves and they appreciate what education can be for the children."

Questioning how much of the training can actually be realized in their teaching, Tina said, "My impression is that they try very hard, they've very good intentions and they will always fall back on what's comfortable and what is habit, but I mean every single teacher all around the world will

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<sup>459</sup> Only one of them was among my interview partners.

always fall back on habit, because it's just so much more comfortable for us."

The foreign teachers were surprised to learn of the Haitian teachers' low social status in their community as reflected by their low salary. It was noted that a quick turnover in teaching positions occurred as some worked as teachers in order to finance their own education, and that many of them seemed to be unaware of their potential role in the community.

Their social and educational circumstances were perceived as extremely challenging, and the foreign teachers expressed great respect for the perseverance of the Haitian teachers. Some of the challenges mentioned were: difficult teaching conditions, classes of 50, 60 or more students, lack of resources, neediness, difficulties with the French language. One teacher remarked, "Knowing what they are up against in terms of teaching in this country, in what can feel like a hopeless situation, I assign them a certain nobility because of their profession." (Phyllis)

### Special Experiences of the Foreign Teachers

Special experiences during the project developed around the cooperative and experimental nature of the project. The methods that were introduced were practiced by the teachers as if they themselves were the students. Lesson plans were changed and adapted according to the experiences of the previous day. For the staff members, this joint effort was a challenge. The concepts of child-centered teaching methods were quite similar among the North American and European staff, but were new to many of the Haitian teachers participating in the project.

- One set of special experiences resulted from the cooperation among the staff members. Most of the teachers did not know each other prior to the project, but here, in a setting they never had experienced before, they were working together.

The experience of two teachers, as well as myself, collaborating on how to present the information--that was really quite an interesting experience. The three of us coming from our different perspectives, our different experience basis, and collaborating to see how we can deliver the best product, the best package to make the lessons as comprehensive as possible. That was a very memorable thing. (Ellen)

Probably my most memorable experience was watching our teachers--how dedicated they were. I had been amazed at their hard-working spirit, at their dedication, their commitment, just their undying energy. Through the ups and downs, they did not complain about their students, not like I've had colleagues complain about their students back home at times, and the conditions are so different--it's culture shock--and they were up late night and up early in the morning, and they were there many hours planning and perfecting and reconfiguring. That has been so amazing to me. (Elisabeth)

- Other meaningful experiences developed from the cooperation between the foreign and the Haitian teachers. The foreign staff was

very impressed by the Haitian teachers' general attitude and their reaction to the methods that were introduced to them.

Whatever class we were teaching, the class was eager to present themselves as competent and as being equal colleagues with us, and we were eager for that as well. (Phyllis)

I put them into groups, and they were working quite hard on the groups, and you could tell it was something special for them, something they don't do a lot. When I saw their faces, it was like, "wow." Back home, whenever I put my kids into groups, there is always one person they don't want to work with, or whatever, but with these people, you could tell it was the first time they'd ever worked with a group. In their eyes you could read, "Well, this is neat, all of us are talking, and it's not the teacher talk, talk, talk and the students just listen." It was, "Wow, we have something to share, we have some kind of knowledge." (Tina)

I gave them a piece of paper, a cardboard template for making out dice, because I knew that they wouldn't have dice to use with their students. They were really happy to have that, and I showed them how to do it, and they were hanging on my every word to see how to make a die. The next day one of the teachers brought me a little paper die that he had made for me. (Jane)

One special moment was when we did the play with the story we had read. We had good laughs, and I was impressed how good actors they are, even though they never do it at school." (Mandy)

During the role play I learned so much about them. I learned they were good actors, and they don't have drama class. They're just naturally very good actors, and I think that they learned a lot. I saw their enthusiasm and their curiosity, and then they were laughing. That was very special to me. (Tina)

One thing was very clear: they wanted to have the correct answer. For there to be a possibility of, you know--there wasn't a correct answer, but lots of good ideas were valued--that was not processed. They wanted the correct answer, and they wanted our affirmation that they did, in fact, give the correct answer. Even personal reactions to a story, they just were not in connection with how they felt about something. It was right or wrong. It wasn't explained what you felt and why. All we could get was very rote response. It was no personal connection to it, and again, that very well could be explained by the survival. How you feel really doesn't enter into this, because that could get some serious consequences in their history, so they did what they needed to do, and they didn't entertain their reactions to it. So that was one thing we were consistently struck by. (Ellen)

The Haitian teachers were really politically correct; they usually tell you what they think you want to hear. (Mandy)

We learned, that they were sort of 'yes-ing' us. (Phyllis)

- We also discussed the question of how the methods we had introduced would fit into the teaching styles of the Haitian teachers.

It was interesting to observe their reaction to doing group work which, for them, doesn't seem to be a strategy which they use very often. They were very eager, I think as much as it was new to them, many of them were saying, "Maybe we could do that with our students," but thinking, "Okay, if I have 40 or 50 students in my class, how would I be able to do that in orderly fashion, make sure that learning is happening during that group work." So that was kind of a fascinating experience to do that with them. (Ruth)

Our task here was to do professional development on teaching strategies rather than content. We did a little bit of both though. We soon realized that their teaching conditions, the conditions that they teach in, are very difficult. Having to adjust our strategies to their context was a challenge. (Ruth)

I really questioned everything I introduced to them. Every strategy, for example, that I talked about with them, I gave it a thought, thinking, "Okay, we do this at home in Canada, how can this work in their context, in their scheme of things, in their working conditions?" Some strategies would overwhelm them. (Ruth)

- All foreign teachers were struck in some way by the poverty and the lack of training of the Haitian teachers.

Just to see the reality of what they have, what they don't have in terms of their resources! They'd often mention that they don't have the same things that we have. (Jane)

My other impression was just how far behind they were, in terms of what they knew. We kept on saying, "We are just here to teach you strategies," but really, at the same time, we were teaching them content that they didn't know. In maths, I was teaching them things that I just assumed that they would know, such as that a third is smaller than a half, but even something that simple, a lot of them didn't understand. So I was really kind of moved by that--how much they have to learn and how difficult it must be to be a teacher when you don't even really know, when you don't understand the content yourself. (Jane)

When we were brainstorming on, "What would make up good notes, if you were taking notes in class? What factors should be included in your notes?" we were expecting them to say things like: the date, key words, important facts, sequence. They went out into groups and talked about it for 15 minutes, made efforts and took notes on their answers. When they came back in, in all earnestness, they would stand in front of the room and say, "To take good notes you need a piece of paper, the board and a pencil." That was an eye opener to me. (Phyllis)

Their abilities were very much like a primary student's back home, including people who did not recognize their names or couldn't write their names. (Phyllis)

It was really difficult for me having to turn the teachers away who wanted to be part of the program, but we were full. We didn't have enough space, we didn't have enough supplies, and I was turning them away saying, "Sorry, you can't come." (Jane)

- Each of the foreign teachers' had a different degree of familiarity with Haiti and found unique ways of relating to the Haitian teachers, being touched by their rich culture.

Every morning they were singing religious songs, and that was really intense. You almost feel religious when they sing it, and you feel the energy. (Mandy)

I came as much as anything to soak in Haitian culture, and I've learned how hard working, how dedicated the Haitians are. You walk down the street, and they seem very serious. They seem burdened by life, and yet when you greet them, "*bonjour*,"<sup>460</sup> "*bonswa*,"<sup>461</sup> they light up and greet back. They have such life in them, such spirit. I'm so glad we have experienced that. (Elisabeth)

I also liked the pulling together--how people worked together--you know. Sometimes in the classroom, there would be all kinds of people who would make jokes or tease, whatever, but when needed, people would pull together. When people would be working together, especially in twos, I felt they were really helping each other. (Patricia)

When they would speak Creole, I would understand quite a bit, and if it was difficult, quite a few of them would ask, "*plus clairement?*" [more clearly?], and I would say, "*oui*," and then they tried again. So I appreciated their patience with me. (Ann)

They enjoyed playing, but when they were out, or when they got something wrong, their physical reaction was very much like that of a child. (Phyllis)

The women were, in general, softer people. In the morning, they would say "*bonjour*," and there was no eye contact, but then at the end, let's say the last three or four days, they would come up to me, and they would talk. Not necessarily personal talk, but ask for advice. For the men, right through the beginning, they were curious even about my personal life, but for them it was more in the classroom or in larger

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<sup>460</sup> Creole word for: hello, good morning

<sup>461</sup> Creole word for: hello, good afternoon, good evening, good night

groups than in one to one conversations. When they were more single, they would say, "hi," "hello," but talk more to their friends. (Ann)

## The Design of the Project

Several teachers voluntarily reflected upon the design of the project and had questions or made suggestions.

I wish that we could see them in their schools. I'd like to be able to do that. Of course, that would be a whole different program to really work with them in a more sustained way. (Patricia)

Sometimes there was more content projected than intended, because our vehicle was the content, but our goal was the strategies. I think, a lot of times, it was the content that was delivered which is still valid because we were purposeful in what content we did drive it through. (Ellen)

For those two weeks, as a résumé, I would say the door was open for them just for a crack, and hopefully something else will happen, or hopefully they'll continue in this direction. There's lots to be done. I think what we did was good. There was a purpose, but there is a lot more to be done in all different areas. (Ann)

I think the conditions were hard, there were a lot of people. 40 to 48 in some classrooms is just a lot--kids or adults--that's a lot of people to work with. So I think they did well, and we did well, under the circumstances. (Patricia)

The lesson plan thing--I'm not sure that was the best use of everyone's time. You know, people up there presenting lesson plans, and so many of the plans were flawed. They had problems with them. I don't know how much they learned from other people's presentations. It seemed like many of the lesson plans had huge problems, still we were trying to find positive things to say. It might make more sense if we gave the students, as an assignment, to present one or two new strategies that they would use in their class. (Patricia)

## **10 Interviews with the Haitian Teachers**

During the two weeks of the project, I interviewed 13 Haitian primary school teachers. In this chapter, their educational backgrounds, their present living and working conditions and their future prospects are presented, as articulated during their interviews and from my own observations.

Introduced first, are portraits of three teachers who entered the teaching profession in unique ways and worked under very difficult circumstances, yet remaining loyal to their profession for approximately two decades. Next, themes common to the lives of the teachers that emerged from the content of the interviews are illustrated. In order to demonstrate these themes, three more portraits are presented. The final part of this chapter is a summary of what has been discussed or observed in relation to corporal punishment.

### **10.1 Portraits of Long-Term Teachers**

Three elder teachers deserve to be placed at the beginning of this chapter, even though they seemed to have had the most difficulty understanding what our project was about. They attended the lessons with willingness and sincerity. At times, they were so occupied with meticulously copying the lesson plan and notes from the blackboard (it took them an extremely long time to do so) that they failed to give their attention to the ongoing activity.

For instance, when we introduced the concept of group work and then divided the teachers into groups, one group happened to be composed of several elder teachers. They all sat down together, facing the blackboard from their assigned corner, and continued to copy the lesson plan even though it was their task to discuss the topic "How to take good notes". They had no idea what they were supposed to do as a group. Only after one of us sat down with them, to get them started in a group discussion, did they have a good exchange. When the time came to present the results of the group discussion to the class, the reticent elder teachers were glad to have younger teachers in the group to do so.

These elder teachers made great effort to meet all the requirements of the training, but were reserved when it came to speaking or writing on the board in front of everyone. This was especially true in the cases of teachers Sainlus and Bernadette and may have been due to their limited knowledge of French.

The teachers whose portraits are about to be introduced share a limited level of education, difficult economic situations and harsh daily schedules. Nevertheless, they have been faithful to the teaching profession for 18, 22 and 24 years.



## From Farmer to Teacher

Sainlus was born in 1956, in a remote village 38 km away from the town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. His parents were farmers and had 9 children. When asked what his childhood had been like, he responded, "Life was difficult--very, very difficult. We did not live well, but we always had hope in God." All the children had to help with the farming. When he was 6 years old, a friend of the family paid his school fees so that he could start school. Exactly how long he had gone to school did not become clear from the interview. He said that he had attended school from ages six to fifteen years and completed through the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He went to a Catholic school, and though it was very strict, and he was sometimes hit, he loved it. At some point, he stopped his schooling in order to work on his family's farm. Several years later, his father died. It became increasingly difficult to make a living from farming in his own village, so in 1978, he moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and started farming there. He grew corn, millet, beans and melons.

He belonged to a church, which, in 1988, needed a teacher for their primary school. It was a small school, and they could not offer a high salary, but when they asked him, he accepted the job and taught 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade there. There were approximately 65 children enrolled in the school and four teachers. He was happy to work as a teacher, but found it difficult to support his family on his salary. During the school year (10 months), he earned 1250 Gourdes a month. He was married<sup>462 463</sup> and had two daughters who were eleven and seven years old. To meet the additional needs of their family, he and his wife sold bread.

Every day, he would get up at 5 o'clock to prepare for school which started at 7:30 a.m. and ended at 1:00 p.m. When he came home, he slept for an hour and then prepared for the next day. From 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., he sat at a busy street corner and sold bread. He loved being a teacher, but hoped that in the future, it would be able to provide adequate financial support. Other than his constant effort to write down everything written on the blackboard and his reserve whenever a task involved presentation in front of the class, the following two situations observed during the training session with Sainlus seem noteworthy.

In one instance, as the project came to a close, the teachers who had completed the training were required to place on a list their names,

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<sup>462</sup> When I refer to the legal status I do not differentiate between married and *plase*. This Creole word refers to a common law marriage, which is wide-spread in Haiti's countryside.

<sup>463</sup> For more details concerning different aspects of Haitian family customs, see for example Bijoux (1990), Herskovits (1937), Ronceray (1979), Schwartz (2000), or Smucker (1982).

schools, and the names of their directors in order to receive their certificates. The lists were on big sheets of paper attached to the blackboard. It took Sainlus a very long time to fill in his information. Upon noticing that he had spelled his first name on the list without using the letter 'n', I asked him if, in fact, that was the correct spelling, as it was different from that on our list. He affirmed. After everyone had completed the list, he came to us and said that he had failed to include his director's last name. He wanted to add the information and had prepared a little note upon which was written the director's name. He copied the name onto the list. Later in the afternoon, he visited our house, and again, brought a little note stating that he had indeed forgotten the letter 'n' in his first name and asked us to correct it so that his name would appear correctly on the certificate.

In complete contrast to this reserved behavior, was the occasion when the teachers did theatrical versions of the story in which a shepherd boy cries for help, claiming to have seen a wolf. All the people of the village come running to help him, yet there is no trace of a wolf. This deception is repeated on the two following days, and after having interrupted their work three times for no reason, the farmers become angry and tell the boy that they do not believe him anymore. Finally, the wolf really does come, the boy cries "Wolf!" again, but no one comes to help him. Sainlus played one of the village people whose work in the field was interrupted to look for the non-existent wolf.

To prepare for the play, the groups of teachers went out to find the necessary props. In Sainlus's group, the people of the village came back with sticks and the seed pods of a flamboyant tree as tools (these seed pods rattle when you shake them). When it was their turn, they hit the ground with their tools and started singing traditional farming songs. This came so naturally that we could see that farming was a meaningful part of the life of all these teachers.

Sainlus was especially absorbed in his role. Contrary to his behavior in class which was usually very formal and insecure, he was relaxed and expressive during the play. When the shepherd boy cried out for the third time that he had seen a wolf, and the people of the village once again did not find a wolf, it was Sainlus who told the boy, in a loud and serious voice, that they would not return again to chase a wolf. During this play, Sainlus's background in traditional farming became very real to those of us from other countries. This was probably the first occasion upon which he could express this part of himself in a school setting.

### Good Fortune for a *Restavèk* Girl

Bernadette was born in 1961, in a small village, 8 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. As a little girl, she often helped in the fields. Her father used to plant sweet potatoes, manioc and yam. She started school at the age of 7 or 8 years--she does not remember exactly--and liked it very much.

Her mother gave birth to ten children, but five of them died at a very young age. When Bernadette was 14 years old, her father died. It was very difficult for her mother to maintain the farm, and the family fell into deep poverty which prevented Bernadette from continuing her education. A neighbor arranged for Bernadette to live and work in the house of Madame Déjean, in her own hometown near Port-au-Prince, and she delivered her there herself. After one year, Madame Déjean died, and Bernadette was passed on to a niece, Madame Audain, who lived in Port-au-Prince. In both households, she had to work a great deal without pay because, as she was told, she was too young to earn anything. They did not, however, consider her too young to toil day after day as Bernadette explained, "I went to the market, I went to fetch water, I cleaned and did housework, I washed the dishes, I did the laundry and I ironed."

After Bernadette had been away from home for three years, Madame Audain moved to Miami. Bernadette was fortunate because, unlike many *restavèk* (see 1.1, 4.1, and 5.1) children who never see their families again, the neighbor, who had originally taken her away from her family, went to Port-au-Prince and brought Bernadette back. The key to this good fortune was the personal relationship between her family and this neighbor who functioned as a mediator between them and the women with whom Bernadette lived as a *restavèk*. The neighbor had partaken in this not only as a business transaction, but also out of a sense of responsibility toward Bernadette and her family. It can be argued that there were some positive aspects to Bernadette's being sent away and that this was a relatively "mild" version of being a *restavèk*. At least she had always had something to eat, whereas in her original family circumstance, though she had also worked hard, there was never any assurance that her basic needs for survival would be met. Nevertheless, she was deprived of her family and her home during an important period of her development, and she was not given the chance to go to school.

When she finally came back home, Bernadette was 17 years old. Her mother had still not recovered from the death of her father, and the family continued to struggle to survive. Bernadette began to care for other people's goats in order to earn money to pay her own school fees and managed, finally, to return to school. Later, she was supported by a local NGO and completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. She was 23 years old by then and became a teacher at the local school where she taught for the next 20 years. She married and had 3 daughters who were, at the time of the interview, 18, 16 and 11 years old. In order to give their children a better education, in 2004, the family had moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre where Bernadette found work at a local school. During vacations, the whole family would stay at grandmother's farm in the countryside and help in the garden where Bernadette's mother continued to grow corn, rice and peanuts.

On a typical school day, Bernadette would get up at 4 a.m. and prepare breakfast for her family. She would get herself ready and go to school which began at 7 a.m. and ended at 1 p.m. She returned home briefly and then went back to school from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. to teach a course to adults

in their thirties. As it was volunteer work, she received only a small compensation for teaching the afternoon course. She earned 1250 Gourdes each of the ten months of school for teaching in the morning. When she thought about the future, her greatest concerns were to be able to help her mother and to give her children a good education.

At the beginning of the training session, Bernadette introduced herself as Mme. Basil--the name also appearing on our list as her first name. Neither her first name nor her last name--Joseph--sounded like a woman's name to me so I asked which one was her first name. She replied that it was Basil and that she is called Mme. Basil. When everyone wrote their names on the list to receive the certificate of completion, she wrote, "Basil Joseph." Aware of the Haitian custom requiring women to be called by their husband's first name, I asked one of the school directors to better explain to her the reason for writing her name on the list. After his explanation, she got up and changed her listed name to "Bernadette Joseph."

When I interviewed her, she told me that she had gone to the countryside over the weekend and that she had come down with a fever when it rained on her way back. She had not wanted to miss receiving the certificate of completion so she had come to the training in spite of the fever. She also showed me her bleeding knees and explained that she had fallen in the morning while hurrying to the training, as she did not want to be late.

### Dedicated to her School and to her Children

Lydie was born in 1966, in a small village 8 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. She was one of 40 children that her father had with 9 women. She grew up in her father's house with 15 of her brothers and sisters while her mother lived nearby. She started kindergarten at the age of 3 years and then primary school at the age of 5 years. After she finished 9<sup>th</sup> grade, she moved to her uncle's house in Port-au-Prince and continued her schooling until she was 16 years old. She had reached the 11<sup>th</sup> grade when she left Port-au-Prince to come back to her village to teach at the public school.

She continued to teach when, a few months later, she had her first child. Another year later, she had a second child. After 4 more years, she had a third child and, after another 4 years, she had a fourth. Over the course of all her pregnancies and births, she continued to teach. During her long career, Lydie taught continuously in the schools of her home village. She worked for 10 years in the public school, 11 years in a Baptist school, and during the last three years, she worked in an Adventist school. She had always taught kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. At the time of the interview, she was 40 years old and proud of her 24 year-teaching career. To earn extra income, she used to sell pastry and cook meals. She also offered embroidery and sewing services.

At the time of the interview her children were 23, 22, 18 and 14 years old. The first three were boys and the last was a girl. Her husband worked as a mason. Eight years before, the family had moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre

so that the children could go to better schools. Because of the relocation, Lydie had to walk 8 km to the village school in the morning and back home on the same route in the afternoon which took about two hours each way. She earned 1500 Gourdes and, since she spent so much time traveling, had no additional opportunity for other income-producing activities. She was proud that her eldest son was in Port-au-Prince preparing for the *philo* test. It was quite a struggle, however, to finance the family costs of living and the education of her children.

Lydie considered the Adventist school where she was currently teaching a good school, yet she deplored the lack of materials and that the building was not completed. She explained that, after a big discussion in the Baptist school where she was teaching before, a split occurred resulting in the founding of the Adventist school.

On a typical school day, Lydie would get up at 4 a.m. so that she could arrive at school around 7 a.m. At 7:30 a.m., she opened the classroom for the students and at 8:00 a.m., school began. When school ended at 1:00 p.m., she walked home. She was tall and very thin. It appeared that the four hours of walking every day used up a lot of her energy.

Lydie was more fluent in French than Sainlus and Bernadette. She did not have any obvious problems following along in the training lessons but did not deeply involve herself either. She displayed a dignified reserve. She had missed the first three days of the seminar and so was not eligible for the certificate, however, she received a letter confirming her partial attendance of the training. It was difficult for her to accept that she could not receive the certificate of completion. As the teacher responsible for her class, I had to abide by the established rules, and this created a certain distance between us. As a researcher, I should have been in a more independent position. This was one time, during the teacher training project, that I realized that the two roles in which I was engaged were in direct conflict with each other. (See chapter 3.4)

In the end, I did not have time to verify the original interview with Lydie, and so there was no opportunity to ask additional questions. In fact, I only found time to really think about her life when I typed up the transcript. I missed the chance to talk with her about her early years of teaching when she had her first two babies at the age of 17 and 18 years.

## 10.2 Themes Common to Teachers Lives

During the interviews, I asked the Haitian teachers about their own educations, the circumstances of their daily lives and their visions of the future. It was quite striking to discover how long most of them had worked to complete their education, equally astonishing was the amount of time invested by those who were still working on it. Thus, **delay** in their educational career emerged as a persistent theme.

Daily life for the teachers was revealed to be harsh and burdensome, most of the time an uphill fight for survival which can be represented within the theme: **drudgery**.

Fortunately, the life of a teacher is not only perceived as a senseless undertaking that leads nowhere. So much effort to achieve their own education or a better future for their children would not have been made if they had not had: **dreams**. This theme did not emerge straightforwardly as had the first two, but as an underlying sense of hope and promise, an enduring belief in possibilities, a certain spirituality...a trust in *Bondye*<sup>464</sup>.

### 10.2.1 Educational Delay

All those interviewed expressed a profound appreciation of a completed school education and attributed great value to a high-school diploma--a *baccalauréat*<sup>465</sup>. Some of them struggled for many years to achieve this goal; others were still in the midst of the struggle, and there were a few who had finally given up.

In the following, different phases of schooling are focused upon: the beginning and early school years, the middle years, and the final pre-graduation years. The situations are described as the interview subjects presented them, as are the factors that had either a supportive or hindering effect on their school career. Each phase is addressed as follows: first, how each one of the teachers progressed in her/his schooling, next, the supportive and hindering influences found in their schools, and finally, the supportive and hindering influences of their families and the social environment.

#### The Beginning and First Years of School

Among the 13 teachers interviewed, the ages for starting school differed widely. The earliest to start were Lydie, at the age of five years, and the latest was Marcelin, who entered primary school at ten years old. The majority started school at the ages of six or seven years (Edwine, Jocelin, Judith, Sainlus, Selisma, Theophil, Willy) and a few when they were eight or nine years old (Bernadette, Isabelle, Kettner, Mogeline).

Concerning the schools, supportive factors included low tuitions and good educations, as in the public schools, or in Willy's case, a school of the Salesian Order which also gave free lunches to their students. Several of the teachers mentioned the positive efforts of their own teachers, in the face of difficult circumstances. Some of the male teachers really loved school, in spite of being hit occasionally, or at least felt that it was not a bad experience. The female teachers did not get hit as much, supposedly because they behaved better, and some of them stressed that they loved learning. Most of the teachers were willing to comply with the strict system

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<sup>464</sup> Creole word for: God

<sup>465</sup> This diploma is achieved in two steps: the *rhéto* test after 12<sup>th</sup> grade and the *philo* test after 13<sup>th</sup> grade.

of discipline. Judith and Edwine were fortunate to go to a school that did not practice corporal punishment.

When discussing factors associated with the schools that hinder the progress of education, the one consistently mentioned as most encumbering was school fees. The parents or the mother sacrifice greatly to pay the fees. Only the public schools which have minimal fees can be afforded easily. The state is not, however, able to provide enough schools for all children. Some of the teachers interviewed went to private schools first and then waited for the chance to enter a public school.

For some teachers, the old, strict system--sitting still, memorizing and frequent corporal punishment--was hard to bear and had a negative influence on their ability to progress in school. Marcelin's answer to the question regarding whether the children were whipped in his primary school was, "Yes, ouch, every day." "Every day?" I asked. He answered, "Ouch, yes--like animals. But as a child, you don't know why, you just obey the orders." Isabelle said, "My mother told me that I was very emotional when I started school and that I was crying a lot all the time." When asked about his experiences with corporal punishment, Selisma said, "The teacher was hitting, but we accepted it, it was a part of our culture. When the teacher was a student, he was hit as well, and then he hit us."

Selisma also deplored the lack of state support. He complained, "The school in our village didn't work so well because there were no communal structures, as this village is very remote, and you can't reach it by car. Probably, that created problems. The school had a thatched roof, the sides were open, and it wasn't really well structured. It was really difficult, unexplainable."

At first, Marcelin did not remember exactly when he had started school and guessed that he had been about ten years old. Later, he said that his late start was due to the lack of organization in the kindergarten in which his mother had put him. He explained, "There was no coordination among the classes and one room for two classes. These were the different grades of kindergarten. Every day I could choose in which class I wanted to go. This cost me a lot of time, and I did not really progress during several years. This was the reason for my late start."

Family and social environment-related factors that were considered supportive of an early start in school were influenced by: the level of education achieved by the parents, the family's financial situation and size, the presence of a father living with the family, and the family's location within or proximity to a town or city, or alternatively, access to city schools by living with city relatives. Edwine was sent to Port-au-Prince to start school and lived with her elder sister. Theophil moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre after third grade to continue school. He had an aunt living there with whom he stayed until he finished primary school.

A few of the teachers grew up in very small families, with only one sibling. This made it easier for their parents to pay their school fees, and allowed

them the flexibility of moving to a location with access to better schools. Judith's mother moved, with her two daughters, to a nearby town when Judith was six years old and ready to start school. When Willy grew up in Port-au-Prince, his mother worked as a street vendor and managed to support her two children in their education.

Having relatives in the U.S. or Canada was mentioned as a positive achievement of the family and may have had a supportive effect on the schooling of remaining members of the family. Several teachers who came from large families mentioned the positive support from their parents who made every possible effort to send all their children to school and to support and help them. In the case of Sainlus, a friend helped to pay the school fees for a few years. Lydie said that, as a child, she liked to play teacher and teach the other children. The fact that she had time to play can be seen as a sign of a supportive environment.

Another powerful support for schooling is the high regard that most of Haitian society has for education and the prestige associated with wearing a school uniform and going to school. Kettner remembered, "I was so proud to go to school at that time. There were people who stayed in the street, but I could go to school."

Hindering factors from family and social circumstances were mostly the result of poverty--the need of the children's help in the fields and with the animals, the large size of the families, illiterate parents, and health-related issues within the family, as in Bernadette's case in which five out of ten children died when they were very young. Kettner explained how he took care of the cows and goats by recalling, "In the morning, after I brought the animals to their place, I cleaned and dressed myself in order to go to school. In the afternoon, before I went out to my animals, I studied my lessons."

When Marcelin spoke, he touched upon the fact that he had started school late but caught up quickly by working hard. He commented, "Yes, I worked a lot, but I also realize that God helped me, for my background was not exactly helpful for me to reach this level. I was under the divine hand. It was a miracle because neither my father nor my mother knew how to read."

Theophil lived with three sisters and approximately ten (he was not sure) brothers in the same house. Not all of them had the chance to go to school. He explained, "There are some who went to school during two or three years and who only went to primary school, and there are others who did not have the chance to go to school--not even one day."

Selisma, who came from a family of ten children, explained, "My parents work in the field to survive and my brothers and sisters too." When asked about the schooling of his two sisters and seven brothers, he said, "One brother is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and one in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the others work in the field."

Some of the teachers lived in a village that did not have a school and had to walk to one in the next village. Mogeline walked to school every morning



for one hour and then back again for another hour after school. This situation probably led to her late start (at 8 years of age). When Edwine moved to Port-au-Prince to live with her sister in order to attend school, she missed her parents and her home. She recalled, "I cried a lot. It was very hard to separate."

### Towards the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Test and Beyond

Among the 13 teachers, only five, Lydie, Judith, Mogeline, Edwine and Willy, had no major interruptions in their education through the early years and into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The remaining teachers lost several years before entering the high-school grades. The timing and reasons for these delays did not always become clear in their interviews, and it was especially difficult for the men to talk about their setbacks. Marcelin was an exception and spoke honestly and in great detail about all the problems he encountered in his educational career.

Isabelle left school after 4<sup>th</sup> grade but continued some time later. Marcelin failed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test and had to repeat it a year later. Bernadette had to leave school in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade to be a *restavèk* and came back to school about three years later. She passed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test without difficulty but only completed her 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.

Sainlus said that he went to school from ages six to fifteen years and reached 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He did not offer the reasons for his limited education. Possible factors might be the poverty and size of his family (nine children) as well as the remote location of his village. Kettner lost three years before he finished 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but the reason was also not made clear. Jocelin, too, was not clear about the five years he had lost and only explained that a typhoid fever had prevented him from going to school for two years.

Theophil finished his primary studies and dropped out of school for several years. He talked about doing business with his mother for two years during that time, but did not fully explain the 14 years that he had lost. Selisma lost about 8 years but only gave details about an eye disease that lasted three years.

Supportive factors within the schools were provided mainly to those children who made great effort themselves. Willy, who went to school in Port-au-Prince, talked about the strictness of his secondary school as a positive attribute. Kettner talked about his favorite subject--maths--saying, "In primary school, I liked maths very much. In the absence of my teacher, I was the maths teacher." This experience lasted from 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When asked if his teacher was absent frequently, he replied, "Even when he was there, he asked me to be the teacher."

Marcelin profited from an arrangement to repeat the 9<sup>th</sup> grade test while going through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He explained, "After 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I did not pass the test, so I changed school again. There I did two things at the same time. I went to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and I took courses to prepare myself to pass the 9<sup>th</sup> grade test."

Edwine loved her school in Port-au-Prince, and she recalled fondly, "They had their ways to help the children to understand and learn better. I loved my school and there are things that I remember. Until today, this school is functioning." When Bernadette came back to school, she had no problems with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test. She was glad that she was able to take the test in her school and did not have to go to a larger city to do so, as is necessary today.

As in the interviews regarding the first years of schooling, hindering factors within schools related mostly to private school fees. Higher fees charged for upper grade education created an even greater obstacle. Depending on where a person lived, the distance between home and school created additional problems since most of the secondary schools of the community are located in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. These issues--school fees and the distance to town--were more than likely the real reasons for the lost years mentioned above and to overcome them, both required additional means. Extra challenges may have come from transitioning to a new school that had higher standards and expectations than had the old school in the countryside. Even the trip to the city for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test, as is common today, is quite a challenge for students from remote villages.

Marcelin explained how he felt when he came to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre to take the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test (he had begun school late and was about 16 years old at that time). He said, "I had to leave my village to come to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre to take the test. The countryside around my village is not like here in the city<sup>466</sup>--it's quite different. When I arrived, I saw the big houses and so many things that were strange for me. All these things disturbed me a lot. I did not know how to get rid of these impressions and so it became a failure. The second time, I was more familiar with the city, and I passed the test."

Supporting factors from family and society were similar to those during the first years of school, and concerned even higher fees and longer distances to school. Both put additional stress on the parents' or mother's income. The parents' ability and willingness to make sacrifices over such a long period of time was a significant help, sometimes only able to be given to a few children out of many. Others were able and willing to help all their children get an education, like Mogeline's parents, who moved the whole family (7 children) to the Baie-de-Saint-Pierre after she finished primary school.

Additional support may have come from local NGOs or members of the church community in which the teacher's family worshipped. When

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<sup>466</sup> In comparison to his village, the small town of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, which appeared rather rural to me, was perceived by Marcelin as a big city. (See remarks about rural and urban in 3.1)

Bernadette returned home, after being sent off to work in different households for several years, a local NGO supported her return to school.

Hindering factors from family and society related to the higher costs of schooling on secondary level, a lack of family income and a lack of connections to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Jocelin had to walk a long way to town every day. Later, when he was older and could afford it, he moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre.

A break in schooling was sometimes the result of medical problems experienced by the teachers themselves or within their families, as it was for Jocelin, who interrupted school because he had typhoid fever. When Selisma was asked why it had taken so long to reach the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, he explained that he had an eye disease for three years. He said, "There was much water coming out of my eyes and they were very red. I went to a hospital, and the doctor gave me some medicine to help me, but, until today, it did not heal completely."

Willy's father died when he was sixteen. A few years later, Willy dropped out of school and was completely unproductive for a couple of years. He recalled, "I left school and I did nothing. I slept. I got up. I ate. I had fun with my friends--all that." Meanwhile, his mother worked for their living. When Theophil's father died, he was nineteen years old. He left school and helped his mother in her business for many years before going back to school.

The harshest effect, however, resulted from the death of Bernadette's father who died when she was fourteen years old. Bernadette explained how, after her father had died, her family struggled just to survive. She remembered, "When he died, when my papa died, we went into the garden, we pulled up yams and planted the yam bulbs in the ground, and put soil on it. Then we all went into the field to pull up manioc and put the beans in the ground. In the end, we pulled up the sweet potatoes. Then came the day when all the farming was done. After that, hunger fell upon us; we had nothing to eat. That was the time when I had to leave." (See 10.1)

### Toward the Central Tests of *rhéto* and *philo*

Sainlus (50 years old) had dropped out of school in 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade when he was fifteen years old. Edwine (38) had dropped out of school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the age of 18 years. Bernadette (45) had dropped out of school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade when she was 23 years old. Lydie (40) dropped out of school when she was in 11<sup>th</sup> grade at the age of 16 years. Considering their ages and that they all have families and children, it is unlikely that they will continue their education. Mogeline (30) had dropped out of school after 12<sup>th</sup> grade when she was 23 years old. There is a slight chance that she will return to her schooling.

Judith (25), Kettner (31), Theophil (37) and Isabelle (37) passed the Philo test at the ages of 21, 30, 33, and 34 years respectively. Marcelin (22), Jocelin (25), Selisma (27) and Willy (29) took the *rhéto* test this year but

did not yet have their results. The results of the 2006 *rhéto* test for all of Haiti are as follows: out of 101,651 participants, 25,116, or 24.71%, passed.<sup>467</sup> 42.8% of the participants had a score that allowed them to repeat the test in August. These results indicate that there is a high statistical chance that, for some of these teachers, education will be delayed again.

As in the previous sections, supportive school factors were the low fees of the public schools (*lycées*), however, the demand for a place in these schools was much higher than the supply. The high-school class schedule of a number of schools was another supportive arrangement. These schools offered classes during the afternoon (from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) so that high-school students could work in the mornings (from 7:00 a.m. or 8:00a.m. to 12 noon or 1:00 p.m.) as teachers in primary schools. Hindering influences were the high fees of private *collèges*. Selisma had to pay 300 Gourdes per year in the public *lycée*, while his friend Willy had to pay 4100 Gourdes for one year in a private school.

As in the early years of secondary school, the distance between home and school created additional costs. Those who had not yet moved to town after 6<sup>th</sup> grade certainly had to move there after 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Some of the teachers could not afford these costs.

After having been away between the ages of 14 and 17 years, Bernadette was happy to return home and go back to school again. When she was offered a teaching job in her village right after she finished 9<sup>th</sup> grade, she began her long teaching career with no real opportunity to continue her own education.

Edwine, who was in Port-au-Prince until 9<sup>th</sup> grade, did not have the money to continue her education and so returned home. To qualify for a job, she attended a regional teacher training during which she was offered a teaching job at a remote public school (30km away from her home). She accepted.

The positive influence of financial assistance from families was gradually replaced or complemented by the efforts of the teachers themselves to finance their own education. Most of the teachers had begun primary school teaching jobs, while completing their secondary studies, in order to pay their own education fees. Although this proved to be a way for them to successfully cope with their financial challenges, the tight daily schedule of teaching in the morning and learning in the afternoon required many sacrifices. Often, they did not have enough of a break between their job

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<sup>467</sup> *Le Nouvelliste*, August 7, 2006, *Examens d'État: publication des résultats: 24.71% en rhéto et 66.89% en philo* [Results of the National Examinations: 24.71% passed *rhéto* and 66.89% passed *philo*]

and school to eat. Their days were long and tiring, which may have been the reason for failed tests and repeated school years. Furthermore, the quality of education for the primary school children being taught might also have suffered from the strain.

Not everyone was ready for such a stress. Kettner left school after 10<sup>th</sup> grade in order to teach in the school that he had previously attended. Then, after four years, he returned to finish his own education. After that, he resumed teaching in the same school as before, employed in the position of *censeur* (which is similar to being a vice-director).

Family connections may play a supportive role in finding a teaching job. After an unproductive period of time during which he relied upon his mother's income, Willy left the capital in order to flee the unrest that prevailed in Port-au-Prince before Aristide's departure in 2004. He moved to the region around Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and worked for a relative who was the director of a rural public school. Six months later, this relative opened a school in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and offered Willy a teaching position there. Willy accepted it and now, as he was working in town, he had the opportunity to combine teaching and learning, so he went back to school.

Lydie stayed with relatives in Port-au-Prince during 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Toward the end of her stay she became pregnant, dropped out of school and went back to her village in the countryside where she started to teach at the local public school.

### **10.2.2 Hardship in Everyday Life: Drudgery**

The different teachers interviewed were in various stages of their lives with equally varying challenges. To describe the difficulties of their daily lives, the issue of low salaries is first addressed, followed by the ways found to secure additional income, and finished by a description of the hardships that characterized their teaching jobs.

#### **Low Salaries at Different Levels**

Not every teacher would discuss her/his salary, but most were willing to do so. These salaries were only paid during the official school year which is ten months long. In July 2006 one U.S. dollar equalled about 40 Gourdes.

Selisma (*rhéto* test 2006/27 years old/has been teaching for 3 years) and Willy (*rhéto* test 2006/29 years old/has been teaching for 4 years) both earn 1000 Gourdes each of the ten months.

Sainlus (left school after 5<sup>th</sup> grade/50 years old/has been teaching for 18 years), Bernadette (left school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade/45 years old/has been teaching for 22 years) and Jocelin (*rhéto* test 2006/25 years old/has been teaching for two years) all receive 1250 Gourdes for each of the ten months.

Edwine (left school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade/38years old/has been teaching for 6 years) and Lydie (left school after 11<sup>th</sup> grade/40years old/has been teaching for 24 years) both earn 1500 Gourdes each of the ten months.

Kettner (passed *philo* test/31 years/has been teaching for 8 years) and Marcelin (*rhéto* test 2006/22 years old/has been teaching for 1 year) have a ten month salary of 2000 Gourdes per month.

Isabelle (passed *philo* test/37 years old/has been teaching for 14 years) complained that her salary in a former teaching position had been reduced over many years. Instead of the original 4000 Gourdes, her wages had dropped to only 2500 Gourdes a month. She and her husband left that school and started their own school last year. Judith and Mogeline were not willing to talk about their salaries. Theophil (passed *philo* test/37 years old/has been teaching for 8 years), reluctant as well, only mentioned that his income as a director was not equivalent to the amount of work that he produced. In the group discussion with the directors, however, he said that the range of salaries for his teachers was between 1250 and 3000 Gourdes. From this information, it could be assumed that he earned at least 3000 Gourdes.

Irregular salary payments was another problem. In some cases, the teachers had waited several months before receiving their "monthly" payment. When we talked about his salary, Willy said, "The salary is very, very small and sometimes we are not paid for two or three months." Kettner also spoke of the difficulty that his school has in paying him regularly. He said, "It's the contribution of the parents. The income of the school fees is too small. Sometimes in June, we haven't yet received the salary of April."

### The Need for a Second Income

For all of the teachers, living on their low salaries was very difficult. If a family had to be supported, the income was far from enough. When asked about supporting a family with his salary, Kettner's comment was, "The money is gone in one or two weeks!"

Selisma explained, "In Haiti, a pair of shoes costs 1000 Gourdes (Willy corrects, '1500 Gourdes'). Just to show how it is to live with 1000 Gourdes, if a pair of shoes costs 1500 Gourdes! Honestly, I have to say, I work as a patriot. The teachers in Haiti live in misery. Many have to leave the country because it is so difficult here. They don't create the structures for us to keep going." Selisma also expressed that a teacher loses the respect of other people when he earns so little.

In 10.2.1, the issues of teaching and learning at the same time have been described and can only occur simultaneously if there are no other responsibilities. Once the *philo* test has been passed, the aspirations of many graduates are to enrol in a university to study a field that will lead to a better job (i.e., law, business, or engineering). Here again, the situation is difficult. The public university does not accept many students and the private universities charge high fees. When the obstacles to a university

education cannot be overcome, or if there is a family to feed, or if children's school fees must be paid, the teaching job is prolonged and other jobs are added to meet the needs.

Sainlus sold bread every afternoon. Isabelle and Mogeline sold toiletries, snacks, canned milk and vegetables. Theophil sold cosmetic articles and school supplies. On weekends and during vacations, Edwine sold food and school supplies. Bernadette had a garden where she planted corn, rice, and peanuts. Of the four teachers still in school, only Marcelin had an additional job working in a children's club.

### Difficult Circumstances at School

None of the teachers that I interviewed had completed a teacher training school (ENI or ENS)<sup>468</sup>. Only Theophil, who was actually a director, went to a teacher training school for about a year. All the others were trained by their directors and during summer training programs. Before they were hired, many of them had to pass a test given by the director of the school. In order to ensure a certain standard of teaching, many schools required that, each morning, the teachers would show their directors the lesson plans detailing what would be taught that day. Only after their plans were approved were they allowed to go to their classes and begin teaching. A great deal of time was required to prepare the lesson plans.

Small schools usually lack teaching material, the rooms are too small and the furniture is old. Often the playground is simply a very dusty yard. Several teachers complained that there were not enough books for the students. Some school houses were not yet completed, or, as in the case of Theophil (see 10.3), schooling took place in a church. Marcelin complained that the teaching staff changed continuously at his school, that every year teachers come and teachers go.

Several teachers lived in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and worked in one of the surrounding villages. Some moved to the city to give their own children the opportunity to go to better schools. Both Lydie and Edwine had a two hour walk to their schools. Their daily schedule was very difficult as may be seen in the following account describing Edwine's routine.

On a typical school day, Edwine would get up at 3:00 a.m. and prepare breakfast for her two children and herself. She left the house at 5:30 a.m. in order to arrive at school by 7:30 a.m. Her school was in a village 8km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. She had moved to the city so that her children could go to school there. After school, she often visited her mother

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<sup>468</sup> *Ecole Normale des Instituteurs* is a teacher training school for the primary level. *Ecole Normale Supérieure* is a teacher training school for the secondary level (see 7.5).

and then walked another two hours back home. When she arrived home, she cooked for her family and prepared the lessons for the next day. Because her husband had died, she was alone with her children. With her salary of 1500 Gourdes, it was extremely difficult to live and pay for her children's education. To meet the needs of her family, she also sold food and school supplies.

Kettner also lived in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and taught in a rural area. Usually he rode to school by motorbike with his director, which took 30 minutes. Sometimes though, they had to walk to school, which took three hours. The way home, which was downhill, was faster and only took two hours. On some days, they taught the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) in the afternoon and arrived back home at 9 o'clock in the evening.



Table 3: Survey of educational careers and remuneration of 13 teachers.

Name/age in years (as of July 2006)	Age at school start/highest grade reached/ at age of	Years of teaching /salary in Gourdes, paid for each of the 10 months of school	Second income (salary in Gourdes)
Sainlus/50	6/6 <sup>th</sup> /15	18/1250	Sells bread
Bernadette/45	8/9 <sup>th</sup> /23	22/1250	Plants corn, rice, peanuts
Lydie/40	5/11 <sup>th</sup> /16	24/1500	No
Edwine/38	6/9 <sup>th</sup> /18	6/1500	Sells food and school supplies
Isabelle/37	9/ <i>philo</i> /34	14/2500 (till last year, now works in own school)	Sells toilet-ries, snacks and canned milk
Theophil/37	6/ <i>philo</i> /33	8/reluctant to talk about it (director), 3000 can be assumed	Sells cosmetics and school supply
Kettner/31	8/ <i>philo</i> /30	6/2000	No
Mogeline/30	8/12 <sup>th</sup> /23	3/reluctant to talk about it	Sells spices, oil, rice, soap
Willy/29	7/ <i>rhéto</i> /29 still in school	4/1000	No
Selisma/27	6/ <i>rhéto</i> /27 still in school	3/1000	No
Judith/25	6/ <i>philo</i> /23	4/reluctant to talk about it	No
Jocelin/25	7/ <i>rhéto</i> /25 still in school	2/1250	No
Marcelin/22	10/ <i>rhéto</i> /22 still in school	2/2000	Children's club (1250)

### 10.2.3 The Gift of Dreams

On the second day of the seminar, the Haitian teachers told us that they wanted to begin each day with song and prayer. We agreed to do so, and for those of us who were foreign teachers, it was a special experience to hear them. With strength and dedication, they sang out loud in many different voices. Worship was obviously a natural and important part of their daily life.

When the teachers were asked about the future--what they expected their lives to be like in ten years--almost everyone immediately responded that the future was left up to God.

Jocelin mused, "That depends on *Bondye*."

Isabelle exclaimed, "It is in the hands of God."

Bernadette said, "I don't know what God wants me to do."

Edwine's dream was to build a sleeping room for herself, but she left the details up to God, saying, "I don't know where, but God knows it."

Judith asked, "How can I know my life?"

Marcelin stated simply, "I leave this to God, as I want to please God."

After Kettner talked about his future plans to get married and study, he added, "If God gives the opportunity, it can be done."

Theophil responded, "After ten years...that's a question that we can't really answer."

When Bernadette was sent to Port-au-Prince to work in a household, she felt very homesick. On the other hand, she had hoped to be able to earn money one day and to support her mother. She remembered, "I always longed for my family and my home, but (I planned that) as soon as they would give me money (she pauses and chuckles as if divulging a secret), as soon as they would give me money, I would save it. I would put it aside and, if I saw someone I knew from my hometown, I would send the money with this person here to my family." She was told, however, that she was too small to earn money, and that she would have to stay a few years longer before she could earn anything. This never happened, but she was able to return home and go back to school. Her dream helped her to survive three lonely years of exploitation.

An optimistic attitude prevailed among the teachers still in school and who continued to expect good things to come. Those teachers who had recently taken the *rhéto* test at the time of the interview did not yet have their results, but most were sure that they had passed.

Willy said, "No, I don't have the results yet, but I'm sure I will sit in the *philo* class next year."

Jocelin proclaimed, "In 2006, I took the *rhéto* test and next year, I'm in *philo*."

Marcelin's answer to the question of whether he had passed the *rhéto* test was a little more cautious. He responded, "I'm pretty sure."

The reality is somewhat different. As mentioned in 10.2.1, only about a quarter of those who took the test passed it.

Once the *philo* test has been passed, the next goal is to study a subject that will provide a better salary than teaching. Because of the difficulties in financing university studies, however, this goal is often postponed and, in many cases, becomes something resembling a dream. Willy wanted to become a lawyer or an engineer. Judith also wanted to study, but had not decided upon a subject. Jocelin wanted either to study law or to go to a teacher training school. Kettner wanted to study business law. Often, their present teaching job was merely seen as a vehicle to reach these goals.

For other teachers, the teaching profession was a vocation. As explained in 10.3, Theophil had always wanted to come back to his village and teach. Selisma had a similar dream. He wanted to one day bring good education to his remote community. Marcelin dreamed of opening a learning center for children and adults. Isabelle too, saw her future in the teaching profession and said, "After ten years, I want to be a good teacher for young children." Sainlus was hoping for better teaching conditions in the future.

When discussing the future, those who had families were very concerned about housing and the future of their children. Lydie said, "I want to know that my children live a good life." Bernadette kept her dream of being able to support her mother. She explained, "For me personally, I would like to have a job and earn some money to help my mother and have enough for my kids and their education so that they can advance more than I could." Edwine said, "My goal is to build a sleeping room, as I don't have one."

Theophil wanted to have a house in which his family could live and a good education for his son. When his interview was verified, he mentioned a few more dreams about travelling, saying, "Another dream is to visit other countries, particularly Canada and Germany." He also dreamed of living a better life, adding, "I would like that the situation in which I live today will have changed after ten years, changed in different ways. At the moment, I have to make too many sacrifices; I'd simply like that this is changing in the future--that's all."

### **10.3 Illustration of Themes Using Several Portraits**

The following are three typical but very different examples used to demonstrate the ways in which both supportive and hindering factors have affected the lives of these individuals, presenting a series of hurdles that, although overcome, contributed to an overall significant delay in the completion of their schooling.

Marcelin's story shows how he gradually (at first very slowly) developed a love for education. When first interviewed, he could not even remember when he started school. Six days later, at the time of his interview verification, he was able to explain the circumstances of his late start in school. After an honest admission of having failed tests, he described unique ways in which he had dealt with his setbacks. Isabelle told about her educational career in great detail. Different from other teachers, she was able to continue her education after having children. Theophil did not go into much detail, but it became clear that there were points in his life when he could not continue his education due to his family's difficult financial situation.

In addition to illustrating delayed progress in education, these three portraits also demonstrate the shared themes of drudgery and dreams. All three teachers had challenging daily schedules and worked hard to make their livings. Marcelin was in the middle of completing his education, and was able to earn an income at the same time. He dreamed of having his own school one day. Isabelle and her husband started one year ago to realize their dream of establishing a school. They would have to endure a few years of scarcity before the school was fully functioning. Theophil was very proud to direct a school in his hometown--his dream for many years--but was now confronted with many difficulties.

### Starting Late and Catching Up

Marcelin was born in a village about 16km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He was one of 23 children born to his father and one of five children born to his mother. His parents did not live together. Marcelin lived with his mother through most of his childhood and only for two or three years with his father. As a little boy, he took care of the goats and helped to weed the garden.

Neither of his parents could read, so his mother could not ensure that he started school successfully. He was kept in kindergarten for several years without learning much and started primary school at the age of 10 years. At first, he went to a private school but then had the good fortune to be placed in a public school. When he had to go to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre to take the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test, he was unable to concentrate because the city was so strange to him. One year later, he passed the test with excellence. For his 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, he moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and lived with a relative of his father. His mother paid his school fees.

When he did not pass the test after 9<sup>th</sup> grade, he began attending a different school where he took lessons to prepare himself again to take the 9<sup>th</sup> grade test while simultaneously completing his 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. This arrangement prevented the loss of another year.

During 10<sup>th</sup> grade, his mother became incapacitated; she had an injured hand and could not work anymore. Marcelin realized that he had to find a way to support his own studies so he began to look for a teaching job. He wrote to a school and was invited to an interview, but another, more

experienced teacher was hired. After some time, this teacher left the job, and Marcelin was hired to replace him. He was required to attend several sessions of pedagogical instruction which he considered helpful in organizing his work.

In the meantime, his mother recovered and so they developed a system of mutual support. From what he earned, Marcelin supported his brothers by buying clothes and shoes for them, and his mother supported him by sending food.

Marcelin was fortunate to have found still another job--he worked at a local NGO children's club. From his teaching position, he earned 2000 Gourdes and, from the club, he earned 1250 Gourdes, so his total monthly income (paid 10 times a year) was 3250 Gourdes. He also tried, at one point, to develop a business involving bicycle parts, but the landlord of the room in which he stored the parts opposed its use for business, so he could not continue.

Marcelin would get up every day at 4:00 a.m. He would wash, dress, prepare breakfast, and study for school. He did not have electricity, and so had to study by the light of an oil lamp. He taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. His *lycée* started at 1:00 p.m. and ended at 7:00 p.m. Afterward, he attended an evening church service that lasted until 9:00 p.m. He usually went to sleep at 11:00 p.m.

The school in which he taught had produced excellent results--nearly 100% of the children tested had passed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade test over the past 5 years. He was not satisfied with his own teaching because the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade tests were not yet good enough. The tests, administered at the end of each month, were passed by 60, 70 or 80 percent of his students. He wanted them all to pass. According to Marcelin, the school needed didactic material and to improve its playground. Most importantly, he believed that the school needed teachers that would stay for many years. Every year, the teaching staff would change.

Marcelin's dream for the future was to open a learning center for children and adults. In addition to core subjects, he wanted to offer courses in English and Spanish.

### From Seven to Thirty-four Years of Age, In and Out of School

After Isabelle was born in 1969, her grandfather asked her mother to send her to his farm in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. There, she grew up with her two brothers, five sisters and her cousins. Her grandfather worked in the fields and her grandmother sold food. They always had enough to eat, but it was difficult to pay the school fees for all the children.

She started primary school at the age of nine years, after spending two years in kindergarten. There, she cried frequently, and it was difficult for her to sit quietly for so many hours. Her schooling was temporarily interrupted after 4<sup>th</sup> grade when her family was unable to pay her school fees. A year later, a local NGO paid her fees and she returned. She

received this support until 9<sup>th</sup> grade. A family friend supported her schooling through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in Port-au-Prince, but after one year, he was unable to continue and so she had to leave her schooling again.

A woman belonging to the church that Isabelle attended in Port-au-Prince showed interest in her development. She decided to support Isabelle by paying the fees for a two-year program in a professional sewing school which she completed at the age of 22 years. She returned to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and was married. After working for some time in a church as a secretary, she was asked by the pastor if she wanted to teach in the school affiliated with the church. She agreed and, in 1992, began to teach 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, later changing to kindergarten. During this time, she also returned to her own schooling, became pregnant and had her first child, a daughter, in 1993. She interrupted her education again but continued to teach.

Two years later, she went back to school and passed the *rhéto* test when she was 27 years old. She had become pregnant again, and her second child, a boy, was born in the same year. She continued working as a teacher but left school again. Three years later, when she was 30 years old, her third child was born. She went back to school in 2002 and passed the *philo* test in 2003. At the time of her interview, her daughter was thirteen and her sons were ten and seven years old.

Isabelle's husband had become the director of the school in which she was teaching. Conflicts occurred with the school management regarding their salaries; they felt they had been working for reduced salaries for too long. This prompted Isabelle and her husband to establish their own school last year. It would take some time before this new school would be fully functioning and profitable, but they were hopeful about the coming years.

Isabelle took care of her new school's kindergarten. She would get up at 5:00 a.m., prepare food for her family and help her children get ready for school. The children had to arrive at school at 7:00 a.m., and she would work in the kindergarten from 8:00 a.m. to noon. When she returned home, she would begin cooking unless a cousin had already done so. In the afternoon, she helped her children with their homework and sometimes went out to sell toiletries, snacks and canned milk. Some evenings, the family would go to church at 7:00 p.m. and return at 8 p.m. Sometimes, they had enough food to have a meal in the evening. Then they would go to sleep and wake again at 5:00 a.m. the next morning.

Isabelle saw her future in the teaching profession. She wanted to be a good teacher for young children. She also hoped that they would be able to give their own children a good education.

### A Dream That Came True

Theophil was born in 1969, in a village 8km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He had three sisters and ten brothers. Some were able to go to school, others were not. He was fortunate to be able to start school at an early age. He went to kindergarten at the age of four years and to the primary school in

his village when he was six years old. At the age of nine years, he moved to the city to live with his aunt and finish his primary studies. He began his secondary education, but, after 9<sup>th</sup> grade, financing school became too difficult, and he returned home to help his mother by selling school supplies. When he was 19 years old, his father died, and his presence became even more important for his mother.

When he was 28 years old, he began attending school in Port-au-Prince where he stayed with a cousin., but, once again, his financial situation forced him to return home. In 1998, he applied for a teaching job in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He was hired and, accepted at the public *lycée* as well, was able to go to school and teach at the same time. He passed the *philo* test at the age of 33 years and subsequently attended a teacher training school in Port-au-Prince for about a year.

Immediately afterward, he was invited to direct a school that was founded in his village in 1992. He was quite pleased and accepted. This was something of which he had been dreaming for a long time. Theophil explained, "Teaching is a vocation for me. I always had in mind, when I finished my school, and when I went to the teacher training, that I wanted to come back to my village in order to share with my friends and my family what I had learned at school. I had the intention to do that, and now I am doing it! I really feel proud of that."

Unfortunately, many problems were present in the school that he directed. The school did not have a building and had to use a church that only had one big room. To separate the classes, partition walls had to be set up. At the end of every week, the walls had to be taken out so that the church services on Sunday could take place. After the church services, these walls had to be erected again. Because the walls were not very high, echoes of what was spoken in the different classes constantly filled the room.

The inability of families to pay reasonable school fees for their children was another problem. From the little income acquired by the school, it was very difficult to earn enough of a salary to support Theophil's family. He had a two-year old son and a wife who was pregnant. For additional income, he bought school supplies and cosmetic articles in Port-au-Prince and sold his merchandise in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and in his village. This arrangement required that he be away a great deal, reducing the time available for the children and teachers of his school.

#### **10.4 Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment**

As explained in 9.1., the issue of the rights of children was a dominant theme in the teacher training project. Given the country's prevailing attitude of acceptance of corporal punishment, it was only natural that an honest discussion of this topic would be difficult. With this in mind, I approached the subject indirectly by asking my informants if they had seen other teachers in their school hitting children. I also raised the topic of their own experiences of corporal punishment when they themselves had gone to school. In the midst of what was, for the most part, a "socially

acceptable conversation," some teachers made very honest comments. Reflections and observations by the foreign staff teachers in connection with corporal punishment are presented at the end of this section.

When I spoke with Isabelle about her schooling experience when she was little, she replied, "My mother told me that I was very emotional when I started school, that I was crying a lot all the time." She could not remember why she had cried, but mentioned that whipping children at school was quite common at that time, and also recalled, "We had to sit quietly for five hours."

Mogeline put the blame on the children, remarking, "Only those who misbehaved in class got hit." Kettner talked about the strictness in his school, saying, "At that time, things were archaic; it was very strict. Who did not know his lesson was punished." Even though Theophil was sometimes hit at school, he laughed about it. He commented, "My experience was not really bad. There have been many changes from past times to now. At that time we had a traditional education. The teachers used to punish the students by whipping them."

Willy described his primary school in Port-au-Prince, remembering, "Some years ago, they were very strict. If you came late, either you had to sit on your knees, or they whipped you." Selisma's comment about childhood schooling reflected a cultural and historical perspective. He said, "It was an archaic system. The teacher was hitting, but we accepted it. It was a part of our culture. When the teacher was a student, he was hit as well, and then he hit us."

When dealing with the question, if in their school they had seen other teachers hitting a child, many of the teachers preferred to avoid discussing the subject of corporal punishment in their lives and would divert the focus to former times or other schools. When Lydie was asked if corporal punishment was commonplace at the beginning of her teaching career, she replied, "I did not have the habit of hitting children." When asked if there were other teachers who hit, she said, "Yes, there were, but not in my school."

Bernadette, upon being asked if there were teachers in her school that hit children, replied, "Yes, there are. Not all, but some, mainly in primary school." During the verification of her interview, she said, "This was some years ago, not now." Referring to herself, she said, "I don't hit them, I give them work to do." Asked about details, she explained, "I have them sing or do a little game to get away from making noise."

Jocelin also avoided talking about his colleagues, saying, "I do not get around so much to see what the other teachers are doing, I can only talk for myself. I don't hit the children; I prefer to talk to them."

When asked if he had seen teachers at his school hitting children, Selisma preferred to talk about how things should be, stating, "No, this had been done in earlier times, but today this is no longer going on. Education has



been modernized. We also have to modernize the education and not hit any child and create other activities to discipline the children."

Judith was simply unable to say anything when asked about corporal punishment in her school. Her friend, Mogeline, a teacher at the same school, was sitting with us during the interview and volunteered to answer this question in place of Judith by responding, "We learned in a training session that we should not hit the children, and our director is very clear about that, he tells us not to hit the children."

When Sainlus was asked if he had seen teachers hitting children in his school, he said, "Yes, but from what we learned here, this system has to be eliminated." When we talked about the instructions from the Ministry of Education against corporal punishment, he added, "The ministry has been saying this since a long time, but we haven't yet received good explanations about it like we have during this training session." He further complimented our project, as he continued, "If you are just told, don't hit the children and nobody shows you strategies how to (not) do that, you will still continue to hit. But from this seminar there will be a big change."

Edwine was also asked if she had seen teachers hitting children at her school and she replied, "Not that much. There are teachers who have the habit of hitting children, but in our class, we do our best that the children don't take a hit." She went on, "I don't like hitting children. If one child really disturbs, I look at him, but I don't like to hit or to mistreat the children."

In spite of everything that Isabelle had already told me and another foreign teacher, Monica, who had done a seminar feedback with some of the Haitian teachers, she had something more to say, provided that it was not taped. After Monica switched off the tape recorder, Isabelle talked honestly about the difficulties she had with disciplining the children. She explained that she would say "no" to her kids one time and then twice, but the third time--she would explode. Monica's observation was, "At least she would count to three before she did it, but she knew that it was wrong--she shouldn't do it--so she was really working on it."

The most honest answer came from Marcelin. When asked if he had seen other teachers at his school hitting children during the year, he replied, "Yes, this year I saw many teachers doing that--me too--I hit the children, but that is not good--that's very bad, and I try to improve it. It's a very bad system." Marcelin mentioned his director's disagreement with corporal punishment and the teachers' reaction by saying, "The teachers have a tendency to hit secretly. He (the director) talks about it every day, 'please don't hit the children, please don't do it,' however, if the teachers are insulted, they do it again."

As explained in chapter 4.2, during colonial times, many African slaves fled into the mountains where they led a hard--but free--life. This was called *marronage*<sup>469</sup>. This same practice has been repeated throughout Haitian history on different levels. Whenever faced with pressure to yield to the system in power, Haitians have shown a tendency to retreat and to continue their own practices<sup>470</sup>. In the case of the pressure on teachers to refrain from corporal punishment, the reaction has been to do it secretly. In order to prevent this clandestine behavior, it appears necessary to refrain from applying pressure and, instead, to find ways to facilitate insight and understanding -- which will take time. The teachers need to experience being treated with patience and respect before they can incorporate these values into their own attitudes toward the children.

A revealing incident occurred at the end of a previously described lesson that used a theatrical version of "The Shepherd Boy Who Cried 'Wolf!'" After the wolf had killed the sheep, and the shepherd boy was scolded by his father, several of the teachers in the audience began shouting to the father, "Kale !!" which means something similar to, "Beat him up!"

In some of the interviews with the foreign staff, we talked about the practice of corporal punishment and our attempts to influence the attitudes of the Haitian teachers.

I'm torn about some things, because I think it's a very subtle and dangerous thing that we're doing. We are coming, you know, we are foreigners, and we're saying, there is a better way to do things. We have to be careful that we are respecting their ways of doing things, as well as showing them that there are other ways. (Patricia)

On the day we had the presentation on children's rights, I just thought, "I put aside the other stuff--the methodology--because this is the most important part, you know, if children are scared to enter your classroom because you've hit them, they're not going to want to learn from you." So then I made the whole morning about that. (Tina)

At the end, I did a reflection and passed the stone around and asked them to say one or two sentences--how they felt about the day, what they learned, or just what they felt like saying at the moment. So then

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<sup>469</sup> Barthélémy describes this collective reaction as having three basic driving forces: flight (which includes geographic, cultural and social withdrawal, isolation, and camouflage), a reinvention of a group and its values (which includes an element of return to forms of basic survival of the group), and the development of values contrasting those of the system that provoked the original flight. (Barthélémy, *Créoles – Bossales: Conflit en Haïti*. 2000, pp. 379-380)

<sup>470</sup> In *Expériences non violentes en Haïti* (2001) Allenbach, Danroc, & Störk explain that relics or revivals of *marronage* are typical for societies marked by slavery (p. 34).

most people said, "Well, I learned about not hitting, and I understand why. Thank you." They would stop there, but there was this one man who said, "Okay, I understand that we shouldn't hit kids, and I understand that it's against the law now. I understand what you are trying to do to change things. Thank you for giving us some solutions for discipline, but I think, in the end, I'm still going to use the stick." I just accepted it. I said, "Thank you," and moved on to the next person. I think it was honest and courageous for that person to come out and say, "I'm still going to be doing it. Despite all you have done, and said, and explained, I still feel like that's what I'm most comfortable with, when it comes to discipline." (Tina)

I went over discipline. We did group work. We brainstormed the biggest discipline problems, and then, in groups, they shared what they would do in their class, and then they presented it, but I noticed, with presentations, you can say a lot of things and not really mean it. But then we did role play, and we role played every situation for discipline, and they realized how hard it really was. (Tina)

One afternoon, four other teachers and I walked to the beach to take a swim. On our way, we passed by a poor area with many small tin huts. Six to eight young children (perhaps between three and seven years old) came running after us, trying to touch us and hold our hands. They continued to accompany us until we told them that they should go back home before their parents began to look for them. Suddenly, a boy of nine or ten years came running after us. He carried a stick and immediately hit the youngest child who apparently was his brother and told him to come home with him. When we told him that he should not do this, the boy stopped hitting his brother, but we realized that our authority would not last very long. On any other day, for any other offense, this would happen again. The elder boy most likely received the same treatment from his parents.

Our project introduced the concepts of children's rights and children's dignity to participating teachers. Consistent with the efforts required for any major behavioral change to occur, these concepts can only be internalized and reflected in their teaching styles after the teachers have spent more time learning and experiencing the benefits of positive classroom management techniques as well as coming to terms with the treatment that they themselves received as students. Ideally, the long-term outcome of this process would be the abandonment of corporal punishment -- not just in the schools but, as the students grow to become parents, within the family homes as well.

## **11 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The focus of this dissertation is upon what has been said by rural Haitian primary school teachers about their own schooling, their daily routines as they teach and struggle to survive, and their future prospects. In order for any attempt to advance education in the Haitian countryside, great importance must be accorded to the perspective of those actually working in the field, regardless of their lack of training and low social status.

A qualitative approach, based on Grounded Theory, was used in the collection, analysis, and presentation of data. Although observations, discussions, interviews, and document research during a four-year stay in Port-au-Prince provided contextual understanding, the core data (observations and narrative interviews) were collected in July 2006, during a teacher-training project in a remote coastal town.

### **11.1 Summary of Background Research**

Haiti's 8.4 million inhabitants live in one of the lower developed countries, yet they each bear the distinction of belonging to the first black republic in the world, after independence from France was achieved in 1804. The self-government that evolved from this independence was characterized by political instability and a refined perpetuation of colonial-power relations by the urban-mulatto elite who continued to exploit the rural-black masses. Prosperity and a classical French-Catholic education distinguished the elite, in contrast to the illiterate masses who were Vodou adepts, spoke Creole, and cultivated the soil. Over 200 years later, a vast disparity in the standard of living continues to exist between the wealthy elite and the impoverished majority. Corruption and ineffective, apathetic governments are to blame for the insufficient provision of public services, especially to those living in remote rural areas, who are completely neglected. The consequential migrations of villagers to towns and from towns to Port-au-Prince have merged to form a mass of slum dwellers that constitute two thirds of the capital's total population. A lifeline for many poor Haitian families has emerged in the form of remittances from family members who have migrated to the United States, Canada or the Dominican Republic. These funds are primarily used for education and food.

In spite of gaining independence from France, the subsequent development of Haiti's system of education continued to be based upon the French school system and the French language. At the same time it was reserved for the elite. There were no significant attempts to create a uniquely Haitian education; the Haitian elite and international influences determined every stage of educational development. In 1860, the Concordat between the Haitian state and the Vatican paved the way for the Catholic Church to take control of schooling the children of the elite. Attempts by the US to establish a system of rural agricultural education during the occupation (1915-34) were met with resistance and eventually discontinued. From the late 1940s, programs aimed at broadening access to public schooling were developed in Port-au-Prince and a few other cities. In the 1970s, when Jean-Claude Duvalier opened Haiti's doors to

international educational support, the number of public and private schools expanded to accommodate children from all levels of society. Especially the number of private schools grew dramatically. Outside of the control of the public education system, many of these schools were of questionable quality. Currently, in the year 2007, 85% of Haiti's school system is comprised of private schools and continues to suffer from Duvalier's legacy of disorder and lack of state control. The financial contribution of Haitian parents to the education of their children has outstripped that of the state--a distinction found nowhere else in the world. Access to higher quality education is characterized by inequity and depends largely upon proximity to a town or city and the parents' ability to afford the fees of better schools. In spite of the fact that impoverished parents invest up to half of their annual income into the schooling of their children—which requires incredible sacrifices--repetition, test failure and drop-out prevail in the poor quality schools that can be afforded.

In the 1980s, a reform of the education system, aimed at improving basic education, was initiated by the World Bank and developed by UNESCO specialists, in cooperation with Haiti's Ministry of Education. In addition to a new structure, the main features of the reform were a child-centered teaching approach and a new curriculum that introduced Creole as both a subject and a language of instruction during the first years of primary school. French was to be taught initially as a foreign language but was to become the language of instruction in higher grades.

Creole is spoken by all Haitians in casual and familiar communication and is used in proverbs, folktales, songs and jokes. Conversely, French is spoken by a minority and is a historical symbol of Haiti's connection to the world; it represents social refinement, classical education and serves as a medium in official and formal exchanges. The role of French in Haiti's traditional education system reinforced its status of superiority to Creole and provided a means by which to restrict access to advanced knowledge. Heated debates regarding the mandating of instructional language did not prevent the reform from being officially adopted in 1989. Ironically, what the World Bank advisors and UNESCO specialists had intended to be an act of support for the majority of the Creole-speaking children was, instead, perceived by their families to be a means of exclusion from the opportunity to learn French (which was identified with receiving a good education). Today, a diluted version of the original reform remains in the curriculum and structure of the official education system. Many private schools still use French as the language of instruction at the primary level, but, because the central tests include a Creole test, Creole is taught as a subject in all primary schools. Although it remains a controversial issue, the inclusion of Creole in the school curriculum has significantly contributed to its social standing as an integral and important part of Haitian culture.

Only about half of the public teachers and few of the private teachers hold teaching diplomas. On the other hand, a large number of certified teachers are dissatisfied with their meager salaries and consider their employment to be temporary as they wait for a better paid job opportunity. The profile of the primary teacher corps is characterized by a young age and little

experience; about half of the teachers are under the age of 35 years and have, at most, five years of teaching experience. Those who stay in the profession must find a way to compensate for their insufficient salaries. Many teachers instruct in different schools concurrently, while others combine their teaching job with farming, selling goods or preaching in a church. The extensive work load, required simply to meet basic living expenses, has a detrimental effect on the individual's quality of teaching.

The interviews and discussions with students and professionals involved with in-service training in rural and disadvantaged urban schools revealed contradictions within a system in the midst of radical change. For example, although the reform program required the use of Creole in primary school, many teachers had no knowledge of the Creole spelling system since, in their own schooling, they had been instructed in French. Likewise was the unrealistic expectation found in the reform's prescription of child-centered teaching methods to be implemented by individuals who, in their own schooling, had only been exposed to the traditional model of rote learning, repetition in chorus, copying from the blackboard, and frequent corporal punishment. In the late 1990s, during a nationwide in-service teacher-training program, supported by France and the US, focused upon the introduction of child-centered teaching methods, many rural teachers' fundamental lack of core subject understanding was revealed. A prerequisite to the paradigm shift from the teaching methods of amassing knowledge through memorization (in a foreign language) to teaching methods that utilize the student's intrinsic understanding and interests as a foundation for learning was not met, as the teachers themselves were not equipped with a sound subject understanding.

Other obstacles to the introduction of new teaching methods included conditions within school environments that did not lend themselves to the implementation of a child-centered approach: overcrowded classes, lack of equipment and teaching materials, directors resistant to the cooperative approach to teaching and who also preferred an authoritative approach toward their teachers, and parents who believed that a good school had to be strict. Several trainers also identified the low teacher salaries as a factor that dampened their motivation to learn new methods. It was suggested that an incentive to obtain in-service qualification would be its association with better remuneration. It was also suggested that, after the training, a follow-up in the classroom would reinforce what had been learned and prevent the teachers from lapsing into old habits. Even though some trainers considered older teachers to be inflexible and unwilling to learn new methods, others insisted that these teachers were needed in the system, and that specific methods to improve the quality of their teaching had to be developed.

Contradictions also plagued a team of school inspectors in a remote school district who, although instructed to train the teachers of both public and private schools in their district and to distribute the corresponding materials, were not provided with transportation to carry out their mission. To reach the schools in their districts, they had to use whatever means of

transport was available (*taptap*, truck, horse, donkey, walking) at their own expense.

## **11.2 Essence of Findings**

The core of this research was assembled from the viewpoints of rural Haitian primary-school teachers, as expressed in their picturesque language, during narrative interviews conducted at a teacher-training project in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre--a remote coastal town in Haiti. These teachers related the experiences of their own schooling, the challenges of everyday teaching and their hopes for the future. Although none of them had graduated from a teacher-training school, nearly all had received in-service teacher training. All of the teachers assigned great value to a high-school diploma (baccalauréat), in spite of the fact that about a third of them (mostly elder teachers) had dropped out of and never returned to school. These particular teachers were distinguished, nevertheless, by a long teaching career. For all the others, graduation had been achieved only after substantial delay.

For some of the teachers, the factors that had prevented them from ever finishing school were the same as those that, for others, had caused a delay in graduation:

- the lack of gratuitous public schools,
- poverty (in particular, large families in which parents were unable to pay private school fees for all their children),
- the necessity of the children's labor in order to maintain their family's farm,
- illiterate parents unable to discern between good and poor quality schools for their children or to help with homework and test preparation,
- the death of an immediate family member,
- malnutrition and health problems,
- forced child labor away from home in a city household,
- kindergartens that repeatedly retained children beyond any constructive purpose,
- the old strict system of rote learning in French (a foreign language for most) coupled with frequent corporal punishment,
- poor quality and unequipped schools in remote villages that received no state support,
- long walks to and from school,
- separation from immediate family members in order to attend a school in town, coupled with the adaptation to the household of a relative,
- and challenging circumstances for children from remote villages when taking the central test after 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the principal town of the school district.

Additional obstacles mentioned with respect to attending or completing secondary school were:

- the higher fees for upper grades,
- the necessity to move to town or Port-au-Prince where the costs of living were higher,

- and the challenge of meeting the requirements of a new school.

In the higher secondary grades, the responsibility for school fees was gradually assumed by the teachers themselves. Typically, high-school students unable to afford their school fees would take a teaching job in a primary school. Once the teachers began to have their own families, however, providing financial support for the family (the role of the men), pregnancy, childbirth and caring for young children (the role of the women) impeded the progress of their own education.

Nevertheless, for most of the teachers, these obstacles did not force them to drop out of school, but, instead, brought about grade level repetitions and interruptions, thus prolonging the length of time spent being schooled and postponing graduation. In spite of all the problems, the factors that motivated, supported and aided the teachers in the pursuit of their schooling were:

- the enormous efforts made by their parents to send them to school,
- their own profound appreciation of a completed school education,
- their family's actual financial capacity to pay the school fees,
- a limited number of siblings,
- the presence of a father living with the family,
- the presence of literacy and education in their parents' background,
- the family's close proximity to or residence within a town or city,
- access to town or city schools gained by living with relatives,
- financial support from relatives living and working abroad,
- low tuition coupled with high quality education in public schools and in certain internationally-supported private schools,
- free-lunch programs offered by certain schools,
- the prestige associated with wearing a school uniform and going to school,
- their teachers' requirement that they study hard,
- the habit of some teachers to assign good students to teach from time to time,
- and the scheduling of a number of secondary school classes during the afternoon which allowed high-school students to take teaching jobs in primary schools.

All teachers mentioned the dilemma created by the high cost of living and the low remuneration received only during the ten months of the official school year. In addition, some teachers complained that they did not receive payment regularly, and that their pay sometimes arrived late by as much as several months. They noted that it was necessary for teachers to be very idealistic about their profession, while, at the same time, society failed to respect and appreciate them. Their teaching salaries had helped them to complete their high-school studies, but were not ample enough to support a family and to pay their own children's school fees. To obtain additional income, the teachers engaged in the selling of bread, toiletries, snacks, canned milk, vegetables, cosmetic articles, and school supplies. Others supplemented their income by gardening, farming, or participating in adult education or in children's club animation. In addition to their job-



related duties, the female teachers had to prepare meals and maintain the family household.

Challenges related to their teaching jobs included:

- the lack of pre-service and the limited in-service training when beginning to teach,
- the requirement of prepared lesson plans to be approved by the director every morning,
- the lack of teaching material,
- the inadequate supply of books for all children,
- the frequent change of teaching staff,
- incomplete school buildings,
- the substandard conditions of school facilities (lack of ventilation, inadequate sanitary facilities, no library),
- the use of a church hall unsuited for teaching,
- dilapidated furniture and the lack of space in overcrowded classrooms,
- and dusty yards as playgrounds.

A few village school teachers had moved their families to town in order that their own children have access to better schools. As a result, the teachers had to walk for several hours every day to and from their village teaching job. The daily journey consumed much of their time and energy, preventing them from taking additional jobs.

Most of the teachers affirmed their fondness for teaching; some expressed pride in being able to educate the children of their home village. In spite of these positive sentiments, the challenges of being a teacher in rural Haiti were revealed to be enormous and to come with little job security, therefore the profession was not considered very attractive. As a result, the high-school students considered a primary school teaching job to be nothing more than a convenient way to finance their schooling but not a profession for life. After graduation, they preferred to continue studying in more lucrative fields like engineering, law, or business. However, since the combination of job and schooling limited the amount of time available to pursue studies, it took the teachers many years to finally graduate. During this time, they often began families, which involved higher costs of living. In order to support their families, they would continue teaching and would supplement their earnings with other income-producing activities, all the while hoping that the standard level of pay for the teaching profession would one day be upgraded.

As an important counterbalance to the everyday drudgery, the teachers relied upon a deep-rooted spirituality. All of them were convinced that their future was "in the hands of God." This trust in divine providence allowed them to be optimistic about their future, even if their present circumstances seemed hopeless; in the midst of all their difficulties, they possessed the gift of being able to dream of a better future. One young teacher expressed that God had already guided him a long way, as he had come from illiterate parents. He was sure that, with God's help, he would one day build a modern school center for children and adults. Even though their lives were consumed by the continuous struggle to learn, teach, and

survive, many of the younger teachers dreamed of university studies and a good job in the future. For the teachers with families, the primary goal was to secure a good education for their children and a better quality of living in the future. One teacher expressed his hope for better times with fewer sacrifices.

The remark regarding corporal punishment, made by a teacher during a pilot interview in Port-au-Prince, led to the inclusion of this subject in the interview guideline used during the 2006 teacher-training project. Not surprisingly, most teachers were hesitant to offer their opinions and avoided making direct statements. They dismissed the subject as "something from the past" or that occurred in "other" schools. The few teachers willing to openly discuss corporal punishment revealed that it was still being used, even though it was not allowed officially. They explained that, in situations in which a student showed disrespect or disobedience, the teachers often felt they had no other alternative but to use the whip, as had been done before. These interviews, compared with earlier observations (see 8.1), revealed that a new awareness had permeated the country, establishing that the use of corporal punishment would not be officially sanctioned. Corporal punishment had not disappeared, but, unlike before, teachers knew that if they used it, they might face disapproval and, perhaps, dismissal.

### **11.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The lack of pre-service and limited in-service training, low remuneration and challenging working conditions combine to make teaching primary school in rural Haiti a vocation laden with difficulty and disappointment.<sup>471</sup> At best, it is a convenient job for high-school students who need to finance their studies. Those who remain in the profession must engage in additional activities that generate income in order to support their families. Even though more and better qualified teachers must be supplied to rural Haiti in order to provide meaningful schooling for its residents, the incentives to pursue a teaching career in the countryside are not made of much more than idealism, hopes, and dreams.

The most obvious obstacles to more access to and better quality of education in rural Haiti are the charging of school fees for the children and the low salaries of the teachers. These financial arrangements reflect a more or less complete lack of state support which leaves the majority of the Haitian schools with no other choice but the organization as small enterprises. Directors are either employed by a school management committee or own the school that they manage. Many schools are formed

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<sup>471</sup> Historical research reveals that some time ago the situation of teachers in rural Germany was not much different, e.g. Enzelberger (2001), Schiffler (1994), or Wynands (1989).

by a church community in order to provide schooling for the children of its members. Group discussions with primary school directors during the summer project in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre indicated that the smallest schools had the most difficulty in paying their teachers an appropriate salary.

It is absolutely critical that teacher-training projects respond to the rural teachers' daily struggle to survive. These teachers' skills can only be improved when, because they are paid well enough to afford a reasonable standard of living, they are able to focus all of their attention on their teaching job--free of the time and energy consuming activities necessary to supplement an insufficient income. A first step toward both increased remuneration and improvement of teaching skills would be achieved by offering a stipend to those who participate in teacher-training programs during the summer. Especially in training sessions initiated by the Haitian government such a sign of acknowledgement toward rural teachers (as opposed to past neglect) could be a first step toward building trust.

In particular, respect and special attention should be accorded to long-term teachers who have acquired valuable knowledge through years of life experiences while continuing to work under difficult circumstances. A program based upon this objective would require the development of in-service training specifically adapted to the veteran teachers' needs and existing levels of understanding. Designed for village school teachers with a certain minimum of years in experience, the training would facilitate their conversion to new teaching methods and improve their understanding of core subject matter. In addition, the provision of step-by-step teaching materials for these teachers would help to compensate for lack of teacher knowledge. A supplement to their salaries that corresponds to the number of years already spent teaching should be included as part of the program. As these teachers, willing to continue in their profession, have been and may be the only educators available to provide academic instruction to rural children in particularly challenging circumstances; any training and incentive directed at improving both the quality of their teaching and of their daily lives as they age and struggle to survive is well invested.<sup>472 473</sup>

In addition to teacher-training projects in Haiti's countryside, a gradual restoration of state governance of private schools is crucial, especially for

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<sup>472</sup> Sargent & Hannum (2005) come to a similar conclusion in their research about teachers in rural northwest China, "Thus it would seem that, to address access to quality education in the rural areas of northwest China, the focus on getting qualified teachers to teach in rural villages should shift toward getting rural teachers qualified" (p. 204).

<sup>473</sup> Anderson's article, "Improving Latin America's School Quality: Which Special Interventions Work?" (2005), confirms the importance of in-service training for teachers in poor neighborhood schools, as "it is more difficult to attract well-educated, experienced teachers to these schools" (p. 227).

those of poor quality. The Ministry of Education, MENFP, and the Organization of the Private Schools, FONHEP, must agree upon a national strategy for the development of disadvantaged private schools. To begin with, these schools could become members of a system of semi-public schools based upon a reciprocal relationship with the Ministry of Education. Responsibilities of the state, as well as those of directors, teachers, and parents would have to be clearly stated and applied equally to each school. Allocations provided by the state would have to be transparent, fair and regular. Ideally, this standard would include school equipment, programs to increase teacher qualifications, supervision, salaries corresponding to qualifications and the number of years teaching, as well as affirmative action in favor of disadvantaged children (school lunches, free books, assistance with the acquisition of uniforms, etc.). Again, long-term teachers in these semi-public schools should be given special attention and status. Complete integration of these semi-public schools into the public school system should be aimed at as a long-term goal.<sup>474</sup>

It is important to note that, although international financing would be required to accomplish such a vast project, this strategy would be most effective if, rather than being imposed by international specialists, it reflected the convictions and visions of responsible Haitian educators who, because of their mutual cultural identity, understand and respond to the opinions and concerns of rural directors, teachers, and parents and are therefore able to respectfully integrate their participation. Unfortunately such desirable developments have been continuously thwarted by corruption, political instability, and neglect of the countryside. In this context Robert Fatton Jr. refers to the sad "reality that the corrupt structures of the past do not die easily: always lurking in the shadows, they continue to shape the new forms that are struggling to be born."<sup>475</sup>

Increased training of new teachers, in order to achieve Education for All, will produce the greatest long-term benefit only if the teachers can be integrated into a system of rural schools bearing the status of professional qualification in which the teachers receive appropriate remuneration. Any attempt that offers a lesser incentive will only continue the current trend in which young teachers look for better paid jobs in the cities, thereby sabotaging the original intent to provide more access to schooling in rural areas. If, on the other hand, newly trained teachers are sent to work in rural schools with a better salary, this will create mistrust and jealousy

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<sup>474</sup> In a paper of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) "Armutsbekämpfung – eine globale Aufgabe," [Fighting against Poverty – a Global Task] it is stressed that there is no alternative to a system of basic education secured primarily by the state. (As quoted in Frommer & Hartmann, p. 90)

<sup>475</sup> Fatton, Haiti's Predatory Republic: The Unending Transition to Democracy. 2002, p. 208

and provoke complicated relationships between the old and the new teachers. International support to provide Education for All is best invested if it gradually improves existing structures.

In addition to factors related to education and teaching, the level of socio-economic development in rural Haiti, as well as its cultural characteristics must be considered.<sup>476</sup> Smith, Schwartz, Trentmann, and Vander Zaag examined four different segments of rural life in Haiti, and provided descriptions of the peasants' customs and habits related to cooperative working, reproduction, and concepts of development. Smith described how, in the village in which she stayed during her research, the lack of food determined the course of everyday life for both children and adults and inspired unique strategies to deal with scarcity. In north-western Haiti, Schwartz observed that parents depended upon having many children in order to have enough laborers to maintain the household and farm.

Children who are hungry, or who are required to perform a substantial part of daily household chores have a limited capacity to learn. Interventions that would strengthen the rural economy would also improve the nutritional intake of the families. Equally important are projects that would improve rural communities' access to water thereby reducing the time spent by children who must fetch water for their families and allow them, instead, to go to school and to study. Another development project that would increase the amount of time available to both teachers and students is the construction of roads and the provision of transportation in place of the time and energy spent on long walks between home and school. These improvements would do much to build trust in the Haitian government by tangibly demonstrating positive regard for the inhabitants of the countryside and would indicate an end to the exclusion of the past. The results of the research on development issues by Trentmann and Vander Zaag indicated the need for a thorough investigation and understanding of existing group structures and local circumstances before proceeding cooperatively with local actors to carefully plan and implement development programs. Vander Zaag suggested that a modest step toward improvement might prove more beneficial within the context of rural life than the imposition of a large project based upon a foreign development concept.

With the exception of some teaching material distributed at the end of the 2006 summer project in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, additional material compensation to the participant teachers could not be offered. In spite of this, they participated in the training full of enthusiasm and sincerity. International teacher-training projects with a focus on practical teaching

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<sup>476</sup> Examples for studies that stress the importance of context for a successful educational development are, Brown & Conrad (2007), Carnoy & Marshall (2005), Overwien (2005), and Schmidt-Behlau (1996).

exercises provide valuable intercultural experiences for both the Haitian and foreign teachers. The Haitian teachers are exposed to teaching and learning strategies that draw upon a child's innate sense of curiosity and ability to draw conclusions, while the foreign teachers are exposed to the experience of teaching under extremely difficult circumstances. For both parties, the limited time period of a summer project allows for only a small glimpse of the other's learning and teaching practices. Repeated projects are recommended to deepen the experience.

In preparation for the summer project in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, strategies to use the familiar to facilitate the understanding and acceptance of that which is not were employed. Trainers were advised to make every effort to design the lessons as practical experiences that could be easily transferred to the schools in which the teachers taught. Materials used in the lessons were to be carefully chosen so that it would be clear that the teaching methods could be readily implemented with locally available materials. The varying levels of pre-existing core subject understanding within the group of teacher participants indicated that future projects would be enhanced by the addition of special training sessions for teachers with an inadequate education. Furthermore, though the initial impact would be limited, a project in which foreign and Haitian teachers cooperatively teach children in a selected school would bring the teaching reality of rural Haitian teachers further into the awareness of the international educational community. At the same time the children and the school community could benefit from being part of the project.

Moreover, projects like this could be designed to be part of intercultural training since, for the foreign participants, working within another culture might provide a unique experience that could lead to a transformed self-awareness. In this regard, an article by Henze & Nguyen<sup>477</sup> on intercultural communication from a pedagogic viewpoint is worthy of notice. To render education department programs at universities more practical by advancing intercultural competence, Henze and Nguyen advocate a creative approach based upon experience in addition to lectures on intercultural theory. They suggest the design and development of appropriate training programs for teachers and educators as a worthwhile endeavour for international and intercultural comparative education.<sup>478</sup> One creative example for the development of teacher training across cultures is a joint "drama-in-education" project realized by educators of a

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<sup>477</sup> Henze & Nguyen. „Interkulturelle Kommunikation aus erziehungswissenschaftlicher Sicht.“ In Moosmüller (Ed.), Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Konturen einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin. 2007

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 110-112

German and a South-African university documented by several participant scholars.<sup>479</sup>

Further research into methods to improve the qualifications and social position of rural Haitian teachers is highly recommended. The findings of this study, based upon a limited number of samples in one remote location, could become a starting point for research into other regions of the country. In order to optimize the design of future projects, it is also recommended that teacher training and subsequent application of what had been learned be accompanied by qualitative research. This would allow for the refinement of training programs to better fit the needs of the rural teachers. In particular, the development of special programs for long-term teachers with little initial education should be further investigated. In this regard, researching the development of easy-to-use material for the teachers would prove to be a worthy project as well.<sup>480</sup>

The following are related topics that warrant additional research:

- The relationship between directors and teachers: If schools participated in training programs, the interpretation and incorporation of new strategies could become a point of contention between directors and teachers. Researching these challenges and potential solutions could affect an approach in training programs that better fosters a cooperative relationship.
- The existing and potential inclusion of cultural traditions (e.g. music, songs, dance, and art) in primary school teaching.
- The role of the inspectors: Within the context of global trends of decentralization, what obstacles do inspectors encounter as they train directors and teachers, and what strategies do they use to deal with these obstacles? Based upon these findings, efforts to strengthen the local offices of the Ministry of Education could be planned carefully and carried out gradually.

However, any of these suggestions only make sense if they are part of a general process of development in Haiti. As Vander Zaag recommends,

Research and scholarship, particularly that which is committed to participatory and mutual learning, must be approached in the context and awareness of larger, on-going patterns of struggle, negotiation and monoeuvre within the social world.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Fuhrmann, Morgen, Schmidt, & Sleur, North-South-Cooperation in In-Service Teacher Training. 2005

<sup>480</sup> Together with rural teachers in Mozambique Da Costa Santos Hübner (2000) developed a handbook designed to meet the needs of teachers who did not have much initial training. Special emphasis was placed on flexibility, reflection, observation, and creativity.

<sup>481</sup> Vander Zaag, p. 322

## 11.4 Haiti in a Global Context

All national education systems are uniquely determined by the history and culture of each individual country. As a result, certain aspects of one national system may or may not be suitable for another national system. The system of primary schools in Bangladesh (BRAC), described previously (see 2.3), appears to have some characteristics that might be successfully adapted to rural Haitian schools. Given the extremely high percentage of private schools in Haiti, however, the creation of yet another private system of schools would be less advisable than integrating the existing small village schools into the public school system. In doing so, it must be remembered that previous attempts to modify existing rural educational standards--to create a specific "rural" curriculum different from other parts of the country--were interpreted to be a form of exclusion from standard education. Nevertheless, the BRAC features that would benefit small village schools are: a cooperative system of close supervision and continued training sessions, the creation and supply of easy-to-use teaching material, the application of the trial-and-error approach in order to develop the most suitable teacher-training program, and the inclusion of all persons involved (students, parents, community members, teachers, and staff).

Weldon's construction of Beninese teacher identities (see 2.3) and his analysis of parents' educational concepts in that country revealed similarities to the educational concepts of Haitian parents. In both countries, the social-screening function of education is construed as normal, whereas the concept of an equal educational opportunity for all children is perceived as far removed from reality. Weldon also concluded that the principles of the child-centered teaching approach directly contradict the principles ingrained in the traditional teacher-centered identities in Benin. His suggestion to treat child-centered teaching in Benin as a long term goal contains wisdom for Haiti as well. Traditional, hierarchical relationships, like those that exist between men and women, parents and children, directors and teachers, and teachers and children need time to change. As detailed with regard to corporal punishment in 10.4, repeated training projects that offer experiences and encouragement are more promising than enforcement of change in behavior. In addition such projects—if they allow a certain flexibility—may involve the teachers' creativity to discover teaching styles that fit to their circumstances.

In her investigation of the reform and reality of Commonwealth Caribbean teacher training (see 2.3), Jennings revealed the contrast between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of practice. Even though a few years earlier, Heads of Government and Education Ministers had identified student-centered teaching as a priority for educational development, Jennings observed that, in the eight Caribbean countries that she investigated, learner-centered teaching methods were neither taught nor practised in the teacher-training programs. Jennings' and Weldon's investigations both reflect contradictions between international educational goals and national realities. These tensions are a global phenomenon as the gap between rich and poor nations widens, as well as the gap between the rich and the poor within most nations.



While private school teachers in Latin America teach children of the elite and receive a better salary, the remuneration of the public teachers has been going down since the 1980s to such a degree that Avelar<sup>482</sup> uses the term pauperization of teachers<sup>483</sup>. However, teachers in the lowest paid regions of Brasil still earn a salary substantially higher than that of rural teachers in Haiti. Nevertheless, in spite of extensive, well established public school systems in South America, there is no fundamental difference compared with Haiti regarding the unequal distribution of educational services. Reimers<sup>484</sup> refers to "disparities in how public educational resources are used" in Latin America when he states:

The most obvious manifestation of this inequality is different levels of public expenditures for children attending different types of public schools, or schools in different geographical areas. Related manifestations of inequalities between schools are more low-quality schools for poor children and less experienced and less educated teachers, with fewer materials and support for high-quality instruction.<sup>485</sup>

As Latin American governments, with assistance from international agencies, have provided access to education to more disadvantaged children, the higher income groups have maintained the socio-economic gap by selectively increasing the opportunities for their own children--an effect that can be observed in Haiti as well. With this consequence in mind, Reimers remarked that "there is no end in sight to the potential growth of inequality that will result from private efforts"<sup>486</sup> of richer families. To balance this, Reimers stressed the importance of the governments' efforts to ensure equal opportunity, otherwise education systems were allowed "to act as the key mechanism for the reproduction and increase of social inequality."<sup>487</sup> Reflecting on global effects on educational reforms, Carnoy<sup>488</sup> warns that the "influence of financially driven reforms tends to redistribute access to schooling away from lower-income students" and blames the states for not using the existing political space to develop alternatives to worldwide ideological trends:

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<sup>482</sup> Avelar, "The Role of State in Education." In Randall & Anderson (Eds.), Schooling for Success: Preventing Repetition and Dropout in Latin American Primary Schools. 1999, pp. 43-52

<sup>483</sup> Ibid., 47

<sup>484</sup> Reimers, "Conclusions: Can Our Knowledge Change What Low-Income Children Learn?" In Reimers (Ed.), Unequal Schools, Unequal Chances: The Challenges to Equal Opportunity in the Americas. 2000, pp. 431-451

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 436

<sup>486</sup> Ibid., 435

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 450

<sup>488</sup> Carnoy, "Globalization and Educational Reform." In Stromquist & Monkman, pp. 43-61

States can provide schooling access more equally, improve the quality of education for the poor, and produce knowledge more effectively and more equally for all within a globalized economy. That they generally choose not to do so is at least partly the result of ideological preference rather than helplessness in the face of new competitive pressures and new, globalized thinking.<sup>489</sup>

Although north-western countries face their own challenges in assuring equal educational opportunities,<sup>490</sup> they tend to assume the status of a "teaching position" toward lesser developed countries when they initiate reforms. The inherent contradiction between advancing a reform aimed at ensuring equal educational opportunities, while, at the same time, using the unequal, authoritative method of imposing a northern agenda is bound to sabotage its progress. In the case of Haiti's school reform this approach has reinforced hierarchical structures already present in the education system. Reflecting about the outcomes of the internationally-planned education reform in Haiti, Bory-Adams<sup>491</sup> remarks:

It appears then that in spite of the obvious positive inputs (partial production of the Basic Education Program, training of many high level educational specialists and setting up of a planning unit at the Ministry of National Education), the contribution of UNESCO to the development of education in Haiti was characterized by premature involvement, oversized ambitions and misperception of the socio-political factors prevailing then. These are the same features that characterized UNESCO's involvement in the Marbial Valley project, forty years earlier. UNESCO's actions and involvement appear to have responded to international trends, not to Haiti's needs.<sup>492</sup>

Presently, in 2007, the political situation in Haiti has stabilized, and so the international agendas and the local needs will have to be negotiated once again. Massive investments toward the goal of Education for All are being injected into the Haitian school system--a set of books for every student in need, tuition for school-aged children not already in school, and the production of more teachers through accelerated teacher training are all on the agenda ...

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<sup>489</sup> Carnoy, p. 58

<sup>490</sup> E.g., Germany's education system received harsh criticism from UN inspector, Vernor Muñoz, for its early stratification and discrimination of socially disadvantaged children. In "Mission to Germany," 2007  
<http://ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/4session/A.HRC.4.29.Add.3.pdf>

<sup>491</sup> Bory-Adams, Educational Policies for Development in the Caribbean; An Analysis of UNESCO's Role and Contribution to Educational Development in Haiti. 1991

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 179

Will the teachers in remote village schools be included in any of the new projects? Will Haiti's needs be considered more carefully this time?

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## **Appendix A – Expert Interviews**

As the presentation of these interviews is directed toward the provision of background information, this is not a word by word transcription. My translation into English of the conversations held in French includes certain abbreviations to allow for easier readability. Nevertheless, I tried to convey what was said as truthfully as possible.

### **Interview with Inspector Fernand**

We met at his house in the evening of May 17, 2001. Mr. Fernand had just come home from a long day of inspector training and was a bit tired. We were sitting on the balcony and a few members of his family were present as well as one of my daughters. It was raining hard and during the interview it got dark. As there was no electricity that evening we could hardly see each other until someone lit an oil lamp. The atmosphere was cordial and honest.

T: Could you tell me something about your profession?

F: I am a principal inspector of national education and I work in a zone close to the Dominican border.

T: How long have you been working as an inspector?

F: I started in 1982. So I have been working as an inspector for 19 years now. But the first years, from 1982 to 1998 I was inspector for a zone but in 1998 I became a principal inspector. So I have had this position for 2-3 years now.

T: Which education did you need in order to become an inspector?

F: After I finished my secondary school I went to the Normal School in Damien where I studied all the fields of education--especially pedagogy, methodology, administration, teaching practice, community education, and sociology. I spent one year as a teacher, then 13 years as school director, and then under the Education Minister Bernard I became an inspector after a qualifying contest. Minister Bernard is the one who started the education reform.

T: What kind of work do you have to do as a principal inspector in your zone?

F: I am responsible for the administrative work in that zone, I am responsible for teacher training. The principal administrators are placed in one zone in order to do all the administrative work not only for the public schools but also for the private schools. We are also placed there in order to train the teachers. That is, when we do our supervision we have to detect the teachers who need training and we organize sessions to give them the information they need. Be it pedagogy, be it teaching practice, be it methodology, we are there to train them. When we see that our teachers need extended training, we ask the people from the national

Ministry of Education to provide this training. So they will organize a longer training session for our teachers. When we organize such a training session it will be for one or two weeks; when the Ministry is organizing such a training session it will be for one month or even longer. During this time the teachers do not work, they only attend the session. We do this district by district--you can't teach all the teachers of the zone at the same time. For example, when there is a training session in one area, the teachers in the other areas work as usual. When the Ministry organizes a teacher training, they do it in the summer time while the students are on vacation.

T: What do the teachers need most in their training?

F: Before all, they need to be trained in pedagogy. They also need training in school administration. They need training in methodology, they need information about teaching practice in order to do their work. The science of education develops and the teachers cannot stay behind doing nothing about it. We have to make all efforts to be up to date. If we stay behind without doing anything in this direction we will find ourselves backwards and behind and the education will be far ahead of us. We cannot be delayed, we have to march in the same rhythm as the science of education.

T: Is there a chance for the teachers to earn more money after having participated in programs of continuous education?

F: The national Ministry of Education is proceeding in this way. For example there are teachers with no initial training, there are *Capistes* with a certain teacher training and there are graduates of the Normal School who have a longer education. The Ministry gives different salaries to the teachers of different education.

T: Is it possible to raise the salary of a teacher who went through continuous teacher training?

F: If a teacher can reach the level of a Capiste through the continuous training he will be paid as a Capiste. But we can't do the training of the Normal School. Who wants to graduate from the Normal School has to go there.

T: Are the teachers in your zone paid regularly?

F: The salary doesn't arrive on a fixed date, it varies. In the province we receive our salaries a little later than the teachers in Port-au-Prince. If the teachers in Port-au-Prince get their money on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (for example), we in the countryside will receive our salary on May 10 or 12. That doesn't have to do with the state, but with the difficulties of transport. There is an employee of each department who has to go to Port-au-Prince and get the checks every month. This creates problems. It is not easy at all.

T: Is there a salary plan for the teachers? Do they receive higher salaries after longer years of work?



F: Yes, for elder teachers the salary will be a bit higher. For the inspectors it is different. The Ministry will decide about raising their salaries, but there are no clear rules about connecting the salaries to the years an inspector has been working.

T: Are you content with your salary?

F: There is a problem, this is not only with the inspectors, this is with everybody. Life is expensive and our salary is not enough to cover the costs of life. You do not earn enough to satisfy your needs. For example in the schools for our children, the school fees have gone up but the salaries haven't. There is no equilibrium between the income and the expenses. This creates our economic problems.

T: What do you consider the biggest problem in your school district?

F: There are numerous problems, but since you asked me for the biggest problem I would say it is our problem with the transportation. In order to do the work of supervision and administration, you need transportation as you have to go to different places, but we have nothing; we have no means of transportation. If there are needs for a school, if they request certain supplies, there is a need to move around and arrange things, but it is not possible. This is our biggest problem.

T: How do you get around?

F: In our district we move around in whatever way it's possible. We have no vehicle. We have no transportation money. If we have to go to a place that can be reached by public transport, we will use the public transport and pay the fees they charge. If there is no public transport, we are obliged to go there on the back of a horse or donkey or walk, but if we take a horse, we have to arrange with the owners to borrow it. If that can't be arranged, we have to walk. That's our problem. If we take a truck and the truck doesn't go exactly to the zone where we want to go, we get off in the middle of the trip and walk the rest. That's hard, that's really hard.

T: How do you live in that zone?

F: I rented a house in the central town of the district. When we visit schools we have to sleep wherever it is possible.

T: With how many inspectors do you work there?

F: I am there with two inspectors of the zone. This is not what the district needs. We should have five inspectors and one principal inspector, we are lacking three inspectors. So with three people we have to do the work of six people and this makes our work much harder.

T: How often do you visit your family in Port-au-Prince?

F: If we were six people I could come every two weeks or every month, but like this, as we are three, the work is much more tiring for the three of us, and we do not have the time to leave so often.

T: Why are there not enough inspectors in your area?

F: This depends on the Ministry. I don't know why they don't give them to us. Maybe they do not have enough money to employ more inspectors.

T: Thank you very much, I could learn a lot from this conversation.

F: You can come back for more information any time when I am here in Port-au-Prince.

Interview with Professor Reginald Paul<sup>493</sup>

We met in his office at Quisqueya University, in the morning of November 8, 2001. The main topic of our conversation were his experiences with a teacher training program (Project 2004) that he supervised. The exchange was sincere and honest.

T: What were your responsibilities with the Project 2004?

P: 1998 was my first year with this project. At that time I helped to establish the approach of the project. I went into the countryside to give training to the teachers of different schools. When I came back I made reports to the project directors so that they could have an idea what kind of teacher training had been done in the countryside. Then from 1999 I became a trainer of the trainers. I had the responsibility to organize training sessions for the "Pedagogic Community Trainers" called ECP (*Encadreur Communautaire Pédagogique*). The ECP had the responsibility to reinvest what they had learned in the schools. It was my task to supervise the training sessions held by the ECP.

In addition I had to compile the reports for the Ministry of Education, that had to be handed in to the project directors, so that they could see the progress that was taking place in these schools. The project was also directed at the communities, as the parents of the students were supposed to be integrated in the administration of the schools. So we had training sessions about community work as well. I prepared the ECP in this sense and I supervised their work in the communities. We had to establish parents meetings to see how they could be integrated into the school. Then, I was involved in the supervision of the program FAD (*Formation à Distance*) in which the students received maths and Creole lessons over the radio. These were my responsibilities.

T: How much time did you spend with the project every week?

P: At least 40 hours. Sometimes it was more. Sometimes we had programs in the weekend, or the ECP came to my house and we had to work out things. I stayed at the university sometimes till 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening to discuss with the ECP about their work and their problems with the training programs for the schools in order to find solutions to these problems.

T: What were the goals of the project and how did you try to reach these goals?

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<sup>493</sup> Prof. Paul explicitly agreed to the publication of this interview by using his name instead of a pseudonym.

P: The principal goal of the project was to arrive at a change of the behavior of different participants who were involved in working with the schools that were taken care of by the project. It is a strategy of the project to organize the schools in groups in order to give them the service package that the project has developed. It involves training, care, and delivery of material and other things. All this is done to reach the goal of changing the behavior of the participants.

In order to reach that goal we had this service package and a whole structure established for the project which is still set up. There is the trainer of the trainers. I had this responsibility from the second year of the project. Then there are the ECP, whom I consider to be the central persons of the whole project. The ECP do the training of the directors and the teachers in the schools. They also take care of the teachers and the directors so that the training can be effectively put into practice. It is also their task to observe if there has been a change in behavior of the actors, or better said, if there were steps in the direction of behavioral change, that can be perceived as progress. I can say yes, we had progress, not an enormous one, but there was progress.

T: With how many teachers did you work?

P: I did not work with the teachers directly. I worked with the ECP and sometimes, if there was a difficult situation, I would go into the field where I attended certain meetings. But my time management did not allow me to be constantly in the field. From the project I was asked to work ten days a month in the field. In these ten days there was also the training that had to be done, this took already six days, as I was responsible for six groups of schools and each group of schools had six schools. So I was responsible for 36 schools. You could multiply this with about six teachers per school.

T: What could you say about the motivation of the teachers?

P: I would say it is mixed. Well, at first they expected to receive a certain raise in their salary. They did not get it. You know the Haitian is always lamenting. This is nothing negative, it is a cultural trait. People complain and adapt themselves. They complained, but one could see them participate in the training sessions. There were some rare absences. There was no real loss. From the mere attendance I can say that they were motivated. It is not easy to attend extra training on Saturdays, or during vacations. It is a sacrifice for them to come to these sessions. So that shows a certain degree of motivation.

Concerning practicing in their classroom what they learned in the training sessions we did not yet come to an exact evaluation. It did not land. And when we tried to find the reasons, the answers were multiple. There was no common answer from all the teachers. When we asked them why they had not applied what they had learned, some would answer: "We don't understand how to put it into practice." Others would say: "Because we are not paid for it," etc. There were many different answers to this question. I can say there was a mixed motivation in the beginning. I think if you want

to get to the root of it, you have to approach the teachers in order to understand their degree of motivation. From another angle I would say they did not really see why they should adopt a different way of teaching. They were not completely convinced of it. If there is no total conviction it is difficult to have a total motivation. I think the problem is at this level. Plus, they did not find the increased continuous care that would have allowed them to really put into practice what they had learned in their training. I have raised this problem many times.

T: What do you think to be the strengths and the weaknesses of the Project 2004?

P: At first, let me say that this is a project based on extremely interesting ideas. In a way, these ideas have allowed our teachers to question, a little, their traditional teaching practice, their classical teaching practice. The project criticized this traditional practice and at the same time it could offer the teachers an alternative. The alternative is child-centered teaching. The basis of child-centered teaching allows the teaching to be aimed at the child and as a consequence it can help the child to develop socially, to be more open to others, and this will instill in the classroom, after all, a minimum of a democratic culture. It also allows the child to participate, in one way or the other in the development of knowledge in the classroom. In general I can say that the positive side of this project is situated in this.

On the other side I have to say, and I have emphasized this many times, that the teachers could not be taken care of in the way they needed, in order to be able to establish a didactic structure of teaching that would really allow them to practice child centered teaching. There is another factor that prevents this teaching style from being totally established in the classroom: The environment of the schools does not always favor the implementation of child-centered teaching. There are, for instance, overcrowded classes. There are classes who do not have much light, and often the aeration is inadequate. There are other factors, it is not necessary to spell them all out here. Generally speaking, the environment doesn't fit.

It also has to be mentioned that the socio-economic level of the teachers is another obstacle for the realization of child-centered teaching in the classroom. In addition, the relationships between the directors and the teachers are not always the best, many times they are not cordial, and that makes the work of our trainers more difficult. Many times the directors do not have the time to supervise the teachers to see if they are effectively putting into practice a child-centered method of teaching, but I also have to say that there are certain directors who are not too interested in that. They are not always interested in making it work. Maybe they have doubts about the project that I don't know of.

I also believe that I could indicate a weakness of the project situated in the service package. There is an accent on pedagogical content, but there is no accent on the subjects. This is mixed into the general education. We have lectures about the didactic of reading, of maths, of oral expression, but

that is not enough, for we found teachers in those schools who did not have a solid initial education. These people would still need basic education, especially in the field of the subjects. If there is a teacher who doesn't know French very well, how can he teach French? If someone doesn't know maths or biology, how can he teach these subjects? The project could not contribute to solve these problems, however, it was designed like that; they wanted to concentrate on the pedagogical side in order to allow the teachers to establish a new pedagogical structure and new pedagogical practices.

T: What were the difficulties for you while you were working with this project?

P: In general, and this is a trait of my character, things usually don't get very difficult for me. Even if there is something that sets me thinking, I'm usually confident to find a solution. I would say the difficulty could be situated at the level of certain relations. Relations with certain people in the system itself. Certain people, on the managing level, merely saw me as an executive who should do his job, and not as someone who is there to reflect and to find solutions to the problems he remarks. They saw me and the other trainers of the trainers only in our function. On this level I had certain difficulties. If I had ideas to share, or wanted to discuss certain questions, this was not always well received. I had the impression that the most important thing was to put into practice what the service package suggested. It was not possible to question the service package. That's what we were asked to do, we were almost commanded. And if things are commanded, that's the end. I can say that my main difficulties were situated at this level. Because of this I even wonder, if I can work with the project in the future. If in this project I am expected to work like a machine without voicing any critique, if I just have to do what I'm told, that's it. In this respect I had a number of problems.

T: What is the solution for the schools that do not qualify to participate in this project?

P: As Haitians it is our responsibility to be aware of the fact that education will initiate the development of this country. I am not talking about the responsibility of the government, but of the responsibility of all Haitians. In my opinion, it is the first condition to get together and start with the realization that it is necessary to level all schools. A standard model for the functioning of all schools has to be defined; a quality standard complying with the basic norms of a quality school. After that the means have to be found and a strategy has to be developed. We do not always have to rely on foreigners in this matter, we have to rely on ourselves first, on the competence that we have and on the means that we have in our disposition to allow these schools to put themselves on the level of this defined standard. I think this has to be done. But I don't know who will do it. I can't do it myself, but if people want to work together to embark into such an enterprise I will enter the ship as well, as I want to give my contribution entirely to the development of this country. I think this is what has to be done.

By the way, I talked about this with a member of the cabinet in the Ministry of Education. I told him yesterday that the Ministry of Education has no control over the schools, the schools function as the directors like and there is no clearly defined frame what an inspector should expect when visiting a school. A frame for such a standard has to be defined, the norms and conditions in which a school should function in order to be a quality school. Based on this standard all these schools should receive help. I am not of the opinion that certain schools should just be closed because they are so bad, no. It is our task to help these schools to progress. There are still too many children in our country who have no opportunity to go to school, who have no access to school.

## Interview with Inspector Hyppolite

I met Inspector Hyppolite in the afternoon of July 5, 2006 in an office of the school in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre in which the correction of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade tests of the whole district was going on. The nature of the interview was quite formal. Inspector Hyppolite sat behind his desk, and I sat facing him from the other side. Another inspector stood at a slight distance listening to what was said.

T: I would like to know in which language the tests after 6<sup>th</sup> grade are written.

H: Well we have two official languages, French and Creole. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade tests there are five subjects, French communication, Creole communication, maths, social studies, and experimental science. These are the five subjects and naturally some subjects are translated. For instance for the social studies there is a Creole version too. The test is given in French but nevertheless for those who want to take the test in Creole it is possible.

T: For which subjects is that?

H: In social studies, experimental science, and maths there is a Creole version of the test, the students can choose.

T: Were the tests sent from Port-au-Prince?

H: There is a national curriculum, which is distributed in all schools of the republic. It is our task as inspectors to assure its application. When the Ministry of National Education (MENJS) needs to evaluate all children, at first, information has to be gathered to know where the children are, at which level the test has to be applied. Then, we ask the directors to verify the tests so that a better equilibrium of these official examinations can be achieved. This is how things are done on the level of conception and planning. Finally, the test that is given is at a medium level. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade test is actually a test for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, which comprises 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There are specialists who work this out on a national level organized by the state, this office is called BUNEXE.

T: Are the tests identical in all districts?

H: Sometimes things go wrong, so there has to be a bank of tests with different tests. For example, the exams in the north may be identical to the exams in the south, but it can also mean that in the west there is another test from the bank. There, they have four to five types of text, and if something went wrong, for instance in one department, it can be quickly corrected.

T: How have the students been doing in this year's test?

H: We are at the moment in the process of reporting the results. There are good ones and bad ones, but since we have not finished this, I can't say so



much, but usually they are much better in maths than in French. The past three years one can see such a development. It seems like the children work much harder in maths than in French. Maybe it is also because the children speak mainly Creole since it is their mother tongue. So it is understandable that they can relate much better to maths.

T: How long have you been an inspector for this district?

H: I have worked here since thirteen years, but in my role as principal inspector it is my fourth year.

T: Where are you from originally?

H: From Port-au-Prince.

T: Did you bring your family here?

H: No, my family lives in Port-au-Prince.

T: So you have to travel a lot.

H: Yes, I come and go.

T: That is not easy.

H: No, but I am not alone, we are a team. He is also an inspector (the inspector who stood and listened to our conversation) and there are others. We are a team.

T: How can the situation of children who have a problem with French be improved?

H: Well, we have a French culture and the children learn French at school. Except for those from the upper class, the children don't speak French at home, but learn French in school. This is the vast majority of children. The courses are held in French, it's a question of adaptation in some way. They need time for that--first for speaking French and then for writing French. We say it is a foreign language for us--it is a foreign language--but it is an official language so it is used at school, so it is spoken at school.

Anyhow, the children adapt themselves because it is an imperative. They have to arrange themselves with writing and speaking French. But this takes time because they still continue to learn French. Even in the first year of university they do something what we call *mise à niveau* (a special French course). So I guess it is a question of adaptation. What is important, is that these two languages are official and both are taught at school.

T: Are there Creole explanations in the French books?

H: Yes, definitely, if there are no explications and translation into Creole they don't understand. And it is the understanding that counts. If everything was in French and the children didn't understand anything, that

would be a catastrophe. When there is a text in French, it has to be translated to the children, so that they can understand the essence of the text, so that they can answer certain questions.

T: Do you do teacher training for the teachers in your district?

H: Yes, that is important because this is a collective work. There is the work for a certain school, but there is also the general work. That's why we meet the directors of the schools, around three times a year. We also meet the teachers, they explain their problems, and we discuss the solutions with them, and give them training. For example, if the teachers say it does not work in French with the children, then we can intervene and evaluate after one year and again after two years and see the results. But there are especially many pedagogical questions. This is because the teachers are in direct contact with the children. That is why we are really interested in the teachers.

T: What is the most difficult aspect of your job?

H: Generally speaking, nothing is easy for us. Our main task is to find the necessary means to function. We have the responsibility to manage the system, but we also have to manage ourselves, our life as individuals. We are trying very hard to arrange for the necessary means to cover the needs of all the schools of the district. And we have certain tasks to fulfil, we have to visit the schools and see how they function. With everything we see and the little we have, we sometimes feel powerless, but what is important is our good will and that we do our work with joy.

## Appendix B – Profiles of Informants

In this section short profiles of all teachers (Haitian participants as well as foreign staff) that I interviewed during the summer project in 2006 are listed alphabetically.

### Profiles of Haitian Teachers Interviewed in July 2006

**Bernadette** was born in 1961 in a village about 10 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. She comes from a poor family, both of her parents worked as farmers. Her mother gave birth to ten children, but only five of them survived their first year. She has two brothers and two sisters. Her father died when she was 14. Today she is married<sup>494</sup> and has three daughters (born in 1988, 1990 and 1995).

She started school when she was 7 or 8 years old. When her father died, the family had such a hard time to survive that she was given away as a servant child to a woman who lived near Port-au-Prince, later she was given to another woman who lived in Port-au-Prince. After three years she returned to her family and went back to school until 9<sup>th</sup> grade. By this time she was 23. Right after she left school she started to teach in her village. She worked in different schools in different villages until she moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre in 2004 so that her children could visit good schools. She found a teaching job in a primary school in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. During the afternoon she is involved in the teaching of adults.

Her salary is very low. During vacations she works on the farm of her mother. For the future she hopes to be able to give her daughters a good education and to take care of her mother.

**Edwine** was born in 1968 in a village 8 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Both of her parents were farmers, she has four sisters and three brothers. She was married, but her husband died. She has three children (born in 1992, 1993, and 1996).

When she was six years old she moved to Port-au-Prince where she stayed with her sister. Here she went to school until 9<sup>th</sup> grade. As she could not afford to go to high school she returned home at the age of 18. She was hired to teach in a public primary school 40 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Due to her husband's death and herself being sick, there were a few years in which she did not work. Then she found a teaching job in her home village.

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<sup>494</sup> As in 10.1 and 10.3 I did not differentiate between married and *plase* (a common law marriage), in fact most teachers were not legally married.

It is not easy for her to support her family with her teaching salary. As she walks two hours in the morning to school and two hours in the afternoon back home she has no time for other jobs. She lives in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre to give her children the opportunity to go to a good school.

**Isabelle** was born in 1969 in a small town north of Port-au-Prince. She grew up with her grandparents in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. She has five sisters and two brothers. Her grandfather was a farmer and her grandmother a vendor, who sold food. Today she is married and the couple has one daughter and two sons (born in 1993, 1996 and 1999). Her husband directs a school.

When she was seven years she started with pre-school and with nine years she started school. After 9<sup>th</sup> grade she went to Port-au-Prince for one year. She got married and went back to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, where she started teaching in 1992. She went back to school and dropped it several times due to the births of her children. In 1996 she passed the *rhéto* test and in 2003 she finally graduated from high school (*philo*). She has worked as a teacher ever since 1992.

In 2005 her husband had just opened a primary school, so for the time being (in 2006) their finances were still a bit tight. Isabelle regularly goes out to sell things like toiletries or food. Once they have all six classes, they hope to have a better income. It is their dream to offer a good school to the children of Baie-de-Saint-Pierre.

**Jocelin** was born in 1981 in a village 6 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He has eight sisters and two brothers. He is the eldest and his youngest sister is only two years old. He is not yet married and has no children.

He started school with seven years in his village. Here he went to school until 6<sup>th</sup> grade. From 7<sup>th</sup> grade he went to school in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. At first he walked the long way from home to school every day, but from 11<sup>th</sup> grade he moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre, where he lives with a couple of school mates in a rented house. In 1999 and 2000 he was sick with typhoid fever and could not go to school. He took the *rhéto* test this year (2006) and hopes to pass the *philo* next year. He started teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre from 2004.

He doesn't have any other jobs, he is busy enough with teaching and going to school.

**Judith** was born in 1981 in a village 25 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. At home they were two children, she and her sister. She is married and has one daughter of 4 years. Her husband is a teacher as well.

She started school when she was six years old in. At that time her mother moved to town with her two daughters in order to give them the opportunity to go to a good school. School was a good experience for her. She passed the first part of the *baccalauréat (rhéto)* in 2002 and started teaching in that year. In 2004 she completed her graduation. While she teaches in the morning her daughter is in kindergarten.

With two teacher salaries her family can live. In the future Judith would like to take up university studies.

**Kettner** was born in 1975 in a village 15 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He comes from a large family, he has six sisters and five brothers, some of them live in the US. He has a fiancé and no children yet.

He started school with eight years in a nearby village. At home he had to take care of the goats and cows. He liked maths very much and the teacher often asked him to teach maths in his place. In 1998 he started to teach in the village where he went to school. Later he left his teaching job in order to finish school in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Here he graduated from high school (*philo*) in 2005. After that he continued to teach at the same school.

He has no other job. In the future he would like to study business law and practice law and teach at the same time.

**Lydie** was born in 1966 in a village 8 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Her father had 40 children from nine women (a few of them live in the US and Canada now). When she was a child, she lived with her father, her mother lived nearby. Today she is married and has three sons and one daughter (born in 1983, 1984, 1988 and 1992). In 1998 the family moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre so that their children could go to better schools.

She started pre-school with 3 years. When she was 14 years she went to Port-au-Prince where she stayed with an uncle. There she went to school until 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In 1982 she dropped school and started to teach in her village. There she worked as a teacher at the public school for 10 years, then she was a teacher in the Baptist school for 11 years and the last three years she worked for the local Adventist school. She is teaching pre-school, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She is very proud of her 24 years teaching career.

Her husband works as a mason. From their salaries it is very difficult to make a living and to pay the school fees of their children. Formerly Lydie used to do bakery, embroidery and sewing, but in recent years she was too busy with teaching and walking to school. As the family had moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and she continued to work in her village she has to walk two hours every morning and walk back another two hours in the afternoon. She is very concerned about the education of her children. They all go to school.

**Marcelin** was born in 1984 in a village 15 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. His father has 23 children with different women, his mother has five children. He lived most of the time with his mother and for a short time with his father. In his mother's household they were five brothers and sisters. He has no family of his own yet.

Marcelin started late in pre-school and was kept there for several years, so his entry into primary school was also delayed. With ten years he began to attend primary school in his village. At home he helped his mother with the

goats and in the garden. With 17 he moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre to go to secondary school there, his mother supported him financially. When he was in 11<sup>th</sup> grade his mother became sick and so he started to work as a teacher to support himself. He took the first part of the *baccalauréat (rhéto)* in 2006.

Marcelin is convinced that his education has been guided by God. He has come a long way as both of his parents are illiterate. For the future he trusts in God's help to have his own school that offers alternative education.

**Mogeline** was born in 1976 in a village 20 km from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. Her father worked on the farm and her mother was a vendor. She has two sisters and five brothers. Today she is married and has two daughters (born in 2000 and 2002).

She started school with eight years in a nearby village. After she had finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the family moved to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. After she had finished 9<sup>th</sup> grade she moved to Port-au-Prince to continue school there. She stayed with a cousin. After 12th grade she dropped school and came back to Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. In 2003 she started to teach 1<sup>st</sup> graders in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre.

Her husband studied in Cuba and works as an engineer, he plans and constructs houses. To earn extra money for her family she sells spices, rice, oil, and soap in the market.

**Sainlus** was born in a village 40 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He comes from a poor family with nine children. They all helped their parents with farming. Today he is married and has two daughters (born in 1995 and 1999).

He started school with six years and continued until he was fifteen. At that time he had reached 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade. After that he worked on the farm of his parents. When he was twenty-two he came to do farming in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre as farming in his village had become very difficult. In 1998 the pastor of his church offered him a teaching job in the small church school. Ever since that time he has been teaching the first years of primary school in that church school.

From his small salary he cannot provide a living for his family, so he and his wife are selling bread in the afternoon. He likes his teaching job and hopes for better working conditions in the future.

**Selisma** was born in 1979 in a remote village around 30 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. A place that cannot be reached by cars. He comes from a poor family, he has two sisters and six brothers. His parents work hard as farmers. Selisma does not have a family yet.

In this remote village he started school with 6 years. As it was so difficult to reach, his school did not receive much support. His education was delayed when he had an eye disease that lasted several years (1995-

1998). In 2003 he started teaching in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and continued his own education at the same time. In 2006 he took the *rhéto* test.

Selisma is not satisfied with his salary. He sees the profession of the teacher as a service to the country but without much opportunity to earn money. For the future he hopes to be able to help to improve the education in his community, but he is not sure how that will work out financially.

**Theophil** was born 1969 in a village 8 km away from Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. He comes from a large family, he has three sisters and ten brothers. His father died when he was 19 years old. Now he has a wife and a little son (born in 2004).

He went to kindergarden when he was four and started school in his village. After 3<sup>rd</sup> grade he moved to his aunt in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre and continued his primary education through 9<sup>th</sup> grade there. Then, he went to school in Port-au-Prince where he stayed with a cousin. After some time he could no longer afford the education there and he went back home where he helped his mother who was selling school supplies and cosmetics. From 1998 he started to work as a teacher in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. After teaching for some time he went back to school and graduated from high school (*philo*) in 2002. After that he was asked to direct a school in his village.

Financially this job is not sufficient. He has to engage in other activities to satisfy the needs of his family. In the future he hopes to build a house for his family and to give his son a good education.

**Willy** was born in 1977 in Port-au-Prince. His father had nine children, but only two from his mother. In the household were only his mother, his elder sister and Willy. His father came from time to time, but he died when Willy was 16. His mother was a street vendor who sold mangoes for a living and to send her children to school. Willy is not married and has no children yet.

He started school with seven years and dropped school after 11<sup>th</sup> grade for several years. In 2002 he came to the Baie-de-Saint-Pierre area to avoid the insecurity in Port-au-Prince. He worked as a teacher in a village and then in Baie-de-Saint-Pierre. So he had the opportunity to go back to school. He teaches in the morning and goes to school in the afternoon. In 2006 he took the *rhéto* test.

With his salary he barely manages to live and pay his school fees. He hopes to be able to study law or engineering in the future.

### Profiles of Foreign Staff Teachers Interviewed in July 2006

**Ann** was born in 1955 and has been a teacher in Canada for 28 years. This was her first trip to Haiti.

**Elisabeth** was born in 1965. She has taught in middle school and high school for three and a half years and and later in college and university for

ten years. She has been to Haiti once before when she and her husband adopted their son.

**Ellen** was born in 1960. She has been formally teaching for two years, but in different capacities she has had a teaching career of 24 years. She has been to Haiti one and a half year ago and she plans further trips in the future.

**Jane** was born in 1973 and has been teaching for 7 years. She had been to Haiti once before and this had inspired her to look for an opportunity to come back with a teaching project.

**Mandy** was born in 1978 and had just finished her first year of teaching. She had never been to Haiti but had learned quite a few things about the country from her Haitian room-mate.

**Monica** was born in 1953. She has been teaching for 25 years and has been to Haiti many times and on extended stays.

**Patricia** was born in 1955. She has been teaching for 26 years, first at different schools and then at the university. She comes from Jamaica and has visited Africa, but she has never been to Haiti before.

**Phyllis** was born in 1959 and has been teaching primary school for six years. Before that she had worked in a business for many years. She had been to Haiti once before with a dental help project.

**Ruth** was born in 1951. She has been teaching for 23 years and works presently as a consultant in the Education Department of her province in Canada. She has been to Haiti once before (in 1983).

**Tina** was born in 1975. She has been teaching for three years and she has never been to Haiti before. She has taught in Mexico for a month.



## Glossary of Creole Words

This glossary includes Creole words that were referred to in the dissertation, as well as some additional expression in connection with Vodou or everyday life. Most words are taken from Freeman & Laguerre, Haitian – English Dictionary. Those words taken from Cosentino, Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou, are marked by an asterisk.

**atribisyon, atibisyon** – profit-sharing agricultural work team, agricultural labor cooperative

**blakawout** – power outage, electrical failure

**blan** – white (color or person); foreigner, any non-Haitian (of whatever race)

**blan nwa** - black foreigner

**Bondye** – God; **si Bondye vle** – God willing; *often used as future tense indicator*

**bonjou, boujou**– good morning; hello; greetings

**bonswa, bonswè** – good afternoon, good evening, good night; hello; greetings

**chwal**\* - horse, in Vodou context the servitor who serves as a medium for the manifestation of a lwa

**dechoukaj, dechoukay** – uprooting, eradication; removal from office, mob justice, lynching; looting, burning; loot seized during uprising

**Dechoukaj**\* – Name given to the popular vengeance wreaked on supposed Duvalierists in the wake of Baby Doc's departure, which included widescale persecution of Vodou priests.

**grangou** – *n.* hunger, famine, starvation; *adj.* hungry

**grandmanjè** – “fat cat”, big shot; glutton

**konbit, konbi, koumbit, kounbit** – cooperative peasant work team for clearing land and harvesting, community work fest, working together;

**konesans, konnesans, lakonesans** – knowledge; common sense; skill; consciousness; intuition; clairvoyance, occult power, extra-sensory perception

**Kreyòl**\* – the Creole language spoken in Haiti

**krik** – traditional offer to tell a story, **krak** – traditional acceptance to listen to a story

**lakou** – small group of huts occupied by members of an extended family, compound; group of houses

**Iwa\*** – spirit, deity; **Iwa Ginen**, the spirits of Africa, ie Rada; **Iwa rasin**, root spirits, or **Iwa Ginen**; **Iwa travay**, ‘working’ divinity—divinity expected to yield results; each temple is under the patronage of one or more **Iwa travay**

**manbo, mambo\*** – priestess in a religious family network

**mapou** – ceiba, silk cotton tree, kapok (large tree with magic and tutelary powers, according to Vodou belief)

**mawonnay, mawonaj, mawonay, mawonnaj** – fleeing, hiding out; custom of forming community of escaped slaves

**moun** - person, people

**mete tèt ansanm** – to cooperate, work together, team up

**onè? ... respè!** Honor (to announce one’s desire to enter a home) ... respect (the reply to enter)

**ounfò\*** – Vodou temple

**oungan\*** – priest in a religious family network

**plase** – to contract a common-law marriage, live together; to arrange a common-law marriage

**peristil** – Vodou peristyle (large covered area partially open at sides where most Voodoo drumming, dancing, and chanting take place)

**poto mitan\*** – sacred center pole of the peristyle through which **Iwa** are said to arrive

**pwen\*** – charm, distilled concentration of energy, magic, spiritual heat

**Rara/rara\*** – masquerade bands associated with Vodou societies that play from January to Easter

**Restavèk, rèstavèk** – unpaid live-in servant

**soup joumou** – pumpkin soup (served esp. on 1 January)

**sosyete** – organized agricultural work group, \*in Vodou context, a religious community

**taptap** – small passenger truck, small pick-up truck used for public transportation; to express a knocking sound

**Tonton Makout\*** – armed guard from Duvalier’s private police

**vèvè\*** – ritual ground drawings used to invoke the **Iwa**

**voye pwen**\* – ‘throw a point’ ie send a barbed message, as in **Rara** songs

**zonbi**\* - zombie; soul separated from body (*zonbi astral*) or body separated from soul, taken after death & made to work

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## Declaration / Erklärung

By this, I declare that I did this research without assistance, and that I have used, exclusively, the indicated sources and devices. To protect my informants, I changed their names and any other information that might lead to the disclosure of their identity. For the editing of the text, I called upon the services of an American teacher.

This work has not yet been handed in as a dissertation to any other university. I am aware of the rules for doctoral graduation at the Education Department of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

For this dissertation, I have chosen the option of online publishing, as offered by the *Computer und Medienservice* of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, in order to allow for easy access to the results of this research. Nevertheless, quotations are only permissible when they contain complete bibliographical specifications.

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Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verwendet habe. Zum Schutz meiner Interviewpartner habe ich ihre Namen und alle Informationen, die auf sie hindeuten könnten verändert. Zur Textredigierung habe ich die Hilfe einer amerikanischen Lehrerin in Anspruch genommen.

Diese Arbeit wurde anderweitig noch nicht als Dissertation eingereicht. Die dem angestrebten Verfahren zugrundeliegende Promotionsordnung ist mir bekannt.

Ich habe die Option des vom Computer- und Medienservice der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin angebotenen elektronischen Publizierens gewählt, um einen einfachen Zugang zu den Ergebnissen dieser Recherche zu ermöglichen. Dennoch sind Zitate nur mit vollständigen bibliographischen Angaben zulässig.